THE TRAVELING GALLERY

BESSE SCHIFF

Pictures by Emma Brock

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HETTY

OLD DOLL

JEREMIAH

LYDIA

SHEP

BABY ROSE

The Traveling Gallery

The twins straightened up as if by magic

The Traveling Gallery

By

BESSE SCHIFF

Pictures by

EMMA BROCK

JUNIOR PRESS BOOKS

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CHICAGO

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To my son, whose encouragement made this book possible.

—Besse Schiff

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This was their first day on the road

Chapter I

FRIENDLY VILLAGE

HETTY sat on the high seat of the Picture Wagon beside her father. She wondered how much farther it was to the little town which was to be their home for the next few weeks, or at least until no one wanted any more pictures taken.

This was their first day on the road; they had started early that morning before the sun was up and Hetty was beginning to get a bit tired.

Even Old Doll was now sauntering along quite slowly, for she, too, was feeling the effects of the day's travel. She had trotted rather briskly all day, with only a short stop for lunch, and the day was warm. Then, too, the Picture Wagon was heavy for one horse to pull. Not that Old Doll was thin; the fact was that she was almost too fat to travel fast.

Father held the lines loosely, and for the time seemed so occupied with his thoughts that he scarcely noticed Hetty. She felt sure he was thinking some important thoughts and should not be disturbed. She busied herself watching the men at work in the fields which they passed. That took her mind off her tired legs, which did not reach the floor of the wagon, unless she sat on the very edge of the seat. The edge was sharp and not at all comfortable, but by changing positions she managed to rest herself.

She wondered what the men were doing in the fields. What were they planting, or were they planting? What was the velvety green carpet that covered some of the fields? She knew it wasn't grass, for it was a different shade from the grass that grew along the country roads on which they were traveling. Was it wheat or was it oats? She must find out while she was in the country.

Hetty knew many things about the noisy, smoky city, but she was beginning to think she would have to go back to the primer when it came to knowing anything about the country. But how she loved it! She hoped she could stay in the country forever. The air

smelled so fresh and sweet as it blew gently against her face. The birds were singing their newest melodies for her especial benefit, or so she thought.

Near the crooked rail fence along the side of the road there were what seemed to Hetty millions of lovely spring beauties, and here and there she caught sight of some blue johnny-jump-ups. She thought she would like to stop awhile and pick her hands full of the fragrant spring blossoms, but there would be plenty of time for that later on, she felt sure. A squirrel jumped up on the topmost rail of the fence, flicked his tail, and ran along the fence as if he were racing with Old Doll and wished to show her some speed.

The sun, which had been shining all of that lovely April day, was fast disappearing behind the tall trees in the distant woods. Father had said they would reach their destination before nightfall. Well, it couldn't be long now.

Hetty glowed with anticipation; then she thought of Father. She hoped he would get well and strong in the pure country air. The doctor had told him he must get out of the bad air of the stuffy city. Then he had sold his big art studio in the city apartment, keeping only his smaller camera and such equipment as he would need to take pictures in a small way.

He had a man make the "Traveling Gallery," which was really a little house on wheels. The man who made the new house called it a "Picture Wagon," because Father was going to use it as a studio.

Hetty thought the little house on wheels was just about the finest she had ever seen, far surpassing the playhouse of her dreams. And to think it was their very own, and they could ride in it anywhere they wanted to go, seeing different towns and different people.

Hetty was thinking, too, of all the ways she would help Father. Mother had died so long ago that she could remember nothing about her. Always it had been Father who had done things for her. Now, it was high time she started looking after him, especially since he was not so strong. She had helped Father with the cooking, now she would learn all about pictures also, for Father must get well and strong.

Gradually the light began to fade as the sun hid itself for the night. Hetty strained her blue eyes forward for some sign of an approaching village, but none seemed forthcoming. Could Father have been mistaken, she wondered?

There had been no rain for several days and the roads were as dry as powder. A cloud of dust ahead of them obscured the view.

"How far are we from Fort Jefferson, Father?" asked Hetty, unable to hold in any longer.

"Not far now, Hetty. Not more than two miles at the most. You can soon see the church spire," he answered, coming out of his reverie. "Are you tired?"

Hetty straightened up with a new determination. "Not very much, only with sitting," she admitted.

She continued her watch and when the dust cleared away, she could see the church spire in the distance, reaching its thin arm high up into the blue sky.

"There it is, Father! I see the church spire! How much higher than the buildings it must be. I don't see any houses yet!" cried Hetty. She shivered with excitement, wondering just what the town would be like. "Tell me what you know about it, Father. The town, I mean."

Father adjusted the reins in the other hand comfortably, and smiled down at Hetty's eager, upturned face. His thoughts slipped back to the time when he was a young man. He had taught school in this very town. He thought of the happy days he had spent here. When he spoke it was not of those thoughts. What he said was, "One of the finest churches in all the country round is in Fort Jefferson. I was never in a more beautiful one."

Hetty's eager look changed to one of glad surprise. "Then you have been here before, Father?"

"Yes, but that was long ago. I have not been back in many years. No doubt it has changed a great deal," he answered, looking ahead at the distant horizon.

By the time they had finished talking about the approaching town, they were at its very doors. People seemed to be spilling out of every house. The doors were open, and children were playing in the streets. It was a funny little town, quite different from any Hetty had ever seen. The people nodded to them as

they passed. Hetty thought they knew her father and were pleased to see him. She could not understand it.

"Who are all these people, Father? Do they all remember you? Even the children seem happy to see us," she added.

"The children would not remember me, Hetty. They are just friendly. All of the people are friendly," explained Father.

"I think I shall call it Friendly Town instead of Fort Jefferson," insisted Hetty, waving to the children as she passed.

Secretly, Hetty thought that it was the little house on wheels that made the people look. No doubt they wondered what it could be doing in their small village. She felt sure they had never seen anything half so fine!

On down through the main street of the town they drove.

"Where do we stop, Father?" Hetty could contain herself no longer, for it looked as if they were going right through the little town without stopping. "Aren't we going to stay here tonight?"

"Yes, of course we are. I have rented a lot on the edge of town for our stay here. We are almost there now," assured her father.

And as they passed on along the main street, they soon came to the plot where they were to make their home—at least, it would be their home for a while. Father drove the little Picture Wagon right in the middle of the green grassy lot and stopped.

"Here we are!" cried Father. "All hands out!"

Hetty climbed quickly down before Father had a chance to help her. How good it felt to be able to stretch her tired legs.

"What a nice carpet we have for our yard!" exclaimed Hetty, dancing around in the soft, velvety green grass.

"Yes, and what a good dinner it will make for Old Doll!" added Father.

"And I can watch her along the road, while she eats grass; can't I, Father?" asked Hetty. "There was lovely long grass along the roads, too."

Hetty unfastened the traces and with Father's help tied up the lines. She held on to the rein while he went to the house next door to ask if they might keep Old Doll in their stable at night—for of course she could stay in the lot during the day—that is, if they tied her fast to a strap. Father soon returned to say that the neighbor was willing to share the stable.

By the time the horse was put up for the night, the stars began to dot the sky like so many diamond points.

Hetty could hardly wait to get things ready for supper. When the coal oil lamp was lit it sent a cheery glow over the little house. While Father went to the house next door to see if he could buy a bottle of milk, Hetty prepared things for the evening meal.

This was like playing house. First she lit the two-burner oil stove and put the coffee on to boil. Then she let down the small drop-leaf table which was hooked up on the side of the kitchenette. The business of set-

ting the table took only a jiffy; everything was so handy in the tiny cupboard by the stove.

Hetty remembered the nice ham Father had included in the groceries before they left the city, and she proceeded to cut some for their supper. It was more of a task than she thought it would be, and she was working hard at it when Father appeared at the door. Just then she gave the knife an extra push, when whack! her finger was right in the way of the sharp knife!

"Now you've done it!" cried Father. "You should let your old dad do the carving. Let's see how badly it's hurt!" And he examined the cut finger. "I'll fix it up in no time at all!"

He found the medicine kit at once, and soon had the injured finger wrapped skillfully. Hetty remembered that Father had told her that he had studied to be a doctor when he was in college; then his mother had become ill, and he was not permitted to finish his course. No wonder he could make such a professional-looking bandage.

The accident did not deter Hetty from her cooking, for as she said, she didn't use that finger very much anyhow. She put the frying pan on the stove and filled it full of the ham that Father had finished cutting. When it was done to a turn, she cracked two eggs into the hot grease and fried them just as Father had taught her, lifting them out with the long-handled pancake turner. Father insisted on cutting the bread, for he said he didn't want Hetty "cutting up any more mon-

key shines" with the knife. One cut finger at a time was quite enough, he declared.

In the few minutes it took to prepare the meal Father sat on a kitchen chair and watched Hetty. It seemed hardly possible that his little girl was really growing up, but he had to admit it.

Soon everything was in readiness; the coffee was poured into Father's cup with some of the rich milk from the Jersey cow next door. Hetty poured herself a generous glass of the same good milk.

"This milk has a different complexion from what we bought in the city, hasn't it, Father?" joked Hetty, and Father agreed.

The two pulled their chairs up to the small table with the lighted lamp right in the middle of it. As Father looked over the table at the appetizing food, then at his little daughter, he declared, "This is a meal fit for a king!"

"Yes, it is," affirmed Hetty, "and you are a king. At least, I'm supposed to obey you!"

"And what would that make you?" joked Father.

"That would make me your subject," reasoned Hetty.

"Wouldn't you rather be a princess?" asked Father.

"Yes, I would, but I'm afraid I don't look much like one!" returned Hetty, thinking of her choppy black curls. "Princesses always have long flowing hair the color of gold. I think I'll just be your faithful subject, or," she added thoughtfully, "I might be your court helper!"

And they might have been Jack Spratt and his wife from the looks of the table after they had finished eating! For as Father said, "If everything is cleaned up, it will be a sunshiny day tomorrow!"

Hetty began the dishwashing and Father unfolded the twin cots from their place on the wall of their small living room. By the time the dishes were finished and placed in their small cupboard, Father had two inviting-looking beds ready for two very tired people, and they were ready for them in no time at all.

Hetty remembered to ask God to make Father strong and well and to send people to have their pictures taken. She lay there a long time before her eyes closed in sleep, wondering about many things. Would she like the little town? And would people want their pictures taken? Would Father's health be better as the doctor had promised?

Quiet brooded over the place. The intense silence kept her awake. She was used to noise and clamor. All at once she heard a tree frog croaking in the distance. It sounded so queer to her coming out of the silence that she almost laughed aloud! She did not know what it was. She listened again, but even the frog must have gone to sleep for she could hear nothing but her father's regular breathing.

Finally drowsiness overcame her and she drew a long breath. That was all she remembered until the sun shining through one of the small square windows fell on her face and woke her up.

Chapter II

A PLAYMATE

Hetty blinked several times before she remembered that she was not in her gloomy apartment in the city. Her heart gave a little jump of joy when she thought of all the things she was going to do today. This meant that she would need to hop out of bed and get busy. Where was Father? His cot was empty, but it had not been put up for the day. No doubt he was afraid he would waken her. Well, she would have to do better than that if she was to be of any real assistance to her father.

By the time she was dressed and had her bedding folded neatly, ready to fasten the bed up for the day, the door opened and Father came in carrying a bucket of fresh water from the well next door.

"Good morning! How are you this morning?" he asked.

"I'm fine, Father, but why didn't you call me? I'm afraid I'm not much of a helper!" acknowledged Hetty.

"I hadn't the heart to waken you," answered Father. "You were sleeping so soundly. Anyway, I've been up only a short while."

Hetty could smell the coffee. She sniffed again. What was that other tantalizing odor? Bacon! And she quickened her speed. All that was left for her to do was to place the things on the table.

After breakfast Hetty cleared away the dishes and put the tiny kitchen in order, while Father got out the sign ART GALLERY, which he had painted before he left the city, and hung it above the door in the front of the little house. Then she straightened up the things in the studio, which was the most important room in the little house, for here was where people would have their pictures taken.

Hetty gave the furniture a final "handkerchief dusting," as she called it. After she had used the dust cloth, she would take out her little pocket handkerchief and wipe off any semblance of dust on the polished surface of the stands. Everything was in readiness for a customer.

Father had removed the singletree from the front of the Traveling Gallery and had placed the steps there. It would make it easier for customers to enter the door. Hetty thought it was fun to step "high and handsome," as she called it, but customers might not like it so well. She laughed about the singletree, as Father called the beam that helped the old horse pull the Picture Wagon. She thought it was poorly named, for it looked like anything else but a tree!

As Father came in from dressing up the front of the little house, Hetty inquired, "Do the people of the village know you are here? That is, do they know that you take pictures, Father?" She was overanxious for fear there would be no customers.

"Of course they do," assured Father. "I sent an advertisement to the mayor to put in their paper. It isn't a large paper they have here, but at least every one of the villagers reads it!"

"I can hardly wait!" sang Hetty as she danced around the room. "I wonder who will be first?"

"I have some business down town, Hetty. Do you want to go with me?" asked Father.

"Oh, yes, I want to see the stores and the church and everything!" cried Hetty.

So, while father talked to Mr. Whipker, the mayor of the village, in his stuffy, small office on the second floor of the Town Hall, Hetty walked on down the main street looking in the shop windows. They did not look much like the lovely large windows of the big depart-

ment stores in the city, but Hetty liked it better, because it was so different.

There was the baker's window with its rows of cinnamon cakes. Hetty determined then and there to have Father buy one for their supper; that, with some coffee and milk, would be all they would need for the evening meal. They looked better the longer she looked at them.

There was the big window of the general store, which from the looks of the window sold everything one could think of, and some things one never would think of. It was like the memory game she played at school; she walked past a table full of all sorts of things; then she wrote down all the names she could remember.

Hetty decided she would play the game all by herself. She looked carefully at everything in the window. When she got home she would see how many articles she could write down from memory. She knew she could not spell all of the words, but Father would help her. He liked to spell. Then it would make up in a way the last few weeks of school that she had missed because she had come with Father.

Hetty did not have time to look in all of the windows, for she glanced up and saw Father waving to her. She would have many days to do the other windows, she felt sure. And it was such fun!

She hurried after her father and they stopped only long enough to buy one of the cinnamon cakes for their

supper. And when they reached the little house on wheels, there was a customer! A woman carrying a baby in her arms. She had come to have the baby's picture taken.

Father soon had the baby sitting in the high chair and smiling at him. The baby's mother told Hetty that her baby was six months old and had four teeth. He was a dear roly-poly with very little hair on the top of his soft round head. What there was resembled the fuzz on peaches. He seemed to like Hetty for he smiled at her with a gurgly sound and would not take his bright blue eyes off her. Father had her stand by the side of the camera. When the baby looked very sweet and cheerful, Father snapped the picture. He took three pictures in all so there would be sure to be one that the mother would like.

Father insisted that Hetty was a great help in making the baby feel at home. He would always want her when he took babies' pictures, he said.

When the baby and his mother had gone, Hetty asked her father if she could lead Old Doll down the road to eat grass. The grass was especially long and green on either side of the road. Then, too, Hetty thought she might find some wild flowers.

"Of course you may; only don't go too far. I might need you," explained Father.

"Let's fix up a signal. When you want me, come to the door and ring that little bell that you used to make the baby look up," advised Hetty.

"Just the thing!" agreed Father. "If I want you to come home right away, I'll ring the little bell."

"Good-bye, don't forget!" warned Hetty.

Hetty went to the stable and untied Old Doll. She loved to be around horses; she had learned much about them, too. She had learned to tie and untie and even to harness a horse. Besides, Old Doll was quite gentle. She had been in the family for a long time. In the city it was the only way they had to get out into the country.

Automobiles had just been invented and they were too expensive for any but the very wealthy to own. There were only a few to be seen in the city. Hetty wondered, as she sat by the roadside holding the long rein, and watching the old horse as she munched the lush green grass, if there were any automobiles in Fort Jefferson. She had seen none since leaving the city.

As Hetty moved farther up the road she noticed some cows feeding on the grass along the roadside. Had they jumped out of the pasture field? Were they running away? Would they run after her? She was afraid of cows that she knew nothing about, but she thought these looked peaceful. She would wait and see.

When she drew nearer, a large collie dog, which she had not seen before, darted out from among the cows, and with a menacing bark ran down the road after Hetty and her horse. The dog looked as big as a lion to Hetty, and she did not like the tone of his voice.

Old Doll liked it even less, for she suddenly lifted her head, pricked up her ears, then started on a full gal-

lop down the road. Hetty held on to the rein, but in order to do so, had to run with all her might. She cried, "Whoa! Whoa!" in a frightened manner. But Old Doll only ran the faster.

The dog was at the horse's heels by this time and its red tongue was hanging out of its mouth, showing long pointed teeth. This made Hetty's heart jump with terror. Besides, Hetty was sure the old horse had never run so fast in her whole life before.

All at once Hetty heard a voice, quite loud and commanding, "Shep! Shep! Come here! Come here at once!"

The collie immediately stopped nipping the horse's heels and obeyed instantly. Hetty was relieved for the moment, and she thought the dog must indeed be well trained to obey so quickly. When she finally managed to get Old Doll slowed down, and had caught her breath, she saw a barefoot girl in a very big sunbonnet approaching.

"Did my dog frighten your horse?" she asked with a friendly smile.

"I'm afraid he did," answered Hetty, still breathing heavily and thinking that no doubt she was more frightened than the horse. But she did not say so.

"I'm so sorry!" said the stranger. Then she turned to the dog, "Shep, come here and make friends with—what's your name?"

"My name's Hetty, Hetty Burkett. What's yours?" she asked shortly.

"Lydia Langdon is mine," answered the girl.

The dog came slowly up, but when he saw that his mistress was making friends, he yapped his delight, and seemed pleased to include Hetty in his list of friends.

"Are you the Picture Man's girl?" inquired Lydia.

"Yes, I am. How did you know?" asked Hetty.

"Just because I know everybody else around here," she explained.

"Don't you go to school?" asked Hetty.

"Yes, but our school's out," returned Lydia.

"I didn't know schools were ever out so early," said Hetty. "Our school in the city won't be out for a whole month!"

For a time neither spoke, then Hetty's inquisitiveness took the lead, "Are those your cows?"

"Yes, they are. I herd them along the road in the spring, and that saves our pasture for summer," explained Lydia.

"You're really clever, aren't you?" said Hetty. "Do you like it?"

"Yes, I do. Only sometimes I get dreadfully lonesome with no one to talk to. Sometimes I bring a book and read," said Lydia.

"Do you like to read?" inquired Hetty, thinking of her own solid enjoyment in her books.

"I've only a few books, and those I've read over and over. I 'most know them by heart!" she confessed.

"I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll lend you some you haven't read," volunteered Hetty, thinking of the

shelves of books they had brought with them in the little house on wheels.

"I'll like that a lot, and maybe you can come often and we can read together," suggested Lydia.

"I will when Father doesn't need me," said Hetty, and then she explained to Lydia about the Traveling Gallery and Father's health which was the real reason for the little house on wheels. She told her she was going to learn all about making pictures so she could help her father more.

"Where do you live?" asked Hetty during a lull in the conversation.

"In that house across the field. There's a lane which leads back from the road," explained Lydia.

Hetty looked in the direction Lydia indicated and saw in the distance a small white house and a very large red barn.

"You must come over to our house some time, will you? We'll have heaps of fun! We have a swing under the big Bellflower apple tree in the orchard. Do you like to swing?" added Lydia.

"I'm afraid I don't know. I never was in a swing in all my life. I'm sure I'll like it though!" smiled Hetty.

"We'll go fishing, too. The canal is just a half mile from our house across the fields," continued Lydia.

"Won't that be fun!" cried Hetty.

And so they chattered on until, "Ting-a-ling! Ting-a-ling!" called Father's little bell.

"Father wants me, I must go. Good-bye, Lydia. See

you tomorrow!" she called as she started to leave.

"Good-bye, Hetty, don't forget to come!" Lydia called back.

Then Hetty and Old Doll trotted back to the little house on wheels. Father was standing in the doorway.

"Do you know what time it is? It is nearly dinner time!" he announced.

The morning hours had slipped away while she and Lydia had chatted. She had not thought it could be so late. She gave Old Doll a drink at the well and tied her in the stable where she could eat the fragrant hay which was piled high in the manger.

"I've found a real playmate!" Hetty told her father while she busied herself getting dinner. "She's almost as nice as Mary Austor!"

Mary Austor was the neighbor playmate and Hetty's best friend when she lived in the city.

Father's curiosity was aroused and he asked jokingly, "Where? Who? How?" all in one breath.

"What did you come for? How long are you going to stay? What did you bring to put it in, and when are you going away?" sang Hetty, laughing. She always thought of that little rhyme when anyone asked more than one question at a time, or at least without waiting until the first one had been answered. But she proceeded to answer them methodically, "Where? Down the road. Who? Lydia Langdon. How? Her dog frightened our horse."

Then she told Father about the queer way she had

learned to know Lydia, and how Shep had almost frightened her to pieces, and how fast she had to run to keep up with the old horse. Father laughed at her recital of the escapade, and because he understood the call of youth for youth, he was glad that his little girl had found a playmate to take the place of the little neighbor whom Hetty adored.

Chapter III

ALMOST DISASTER

The following morning, after Hetty had tidied up the little house, she put on her big floppy hat, selected two of her best-loved books and with Old Doll on the end of a strap, started down the road in the hope of finding Lydia. Father thought it a good idea for her to lend her new acquaintance some books to read, for as he said, "Books are our friends and we must not be selfish with them."

Hetty soon came in sight of the herd of cattle and

sure enough, there was the pink sunbonnet! She felt confident that Lydia would be under its ample folds, but she could not be sure at that distance.

When Shep, who had been helping guard the cows, caught sight of Hetty and her horse, he came bounding up to meet her with an attitude in decided contrast to yesterday's defiant greeting. Lydia soon followed and was overjoyed to see the books which Hetty had tucked under her arm.

"You've brought some books! Oh, goody!" she cried.

"You may keep them as long as you wish," announced Hetty generously.

"Let's sit down on the grass and begin one this minute!" suggested Lydia enthusiastically. "We'll tie your horse to the fence and she can eat all she wants!" And she proceeded to carry out her own idea.

"That's fine! Now which book shall it be?" asked Hetty. "They're for you, you know!" And she held out the books for Lydia's inspection.

"You read the beginning of each one, and then I'll choose which one we will read aloud," she deliberated.

"Well, then, how does this sound? 'Coasting on all night by unknown and out-of-the-way shores, they came to the land where the Cyclops dwell, a sort of giant shepherds that neither sow nor plough, but—' "

"There! That will do! We won't bother to read the beginning of the other one," interrupted Lydia. "I like giants! We'll read this one. You read awhile and I'll listen. I love to listen."

Hetty did not need to be coaxed; she was a good reader and liked nothing better than reading aloud, especially if she had an appreciative listener. Lydia was just that, so Hetty read on and on, forgetful of everything but the adventurous story she was reading; she forgot she was to watch Old Doll as she munched grass at the end of the strap.

Even Lydia was unconscious of the cows; they had wandered far up the road, but Shep was a good watch dog. He would not let them stray too far. If Hetty had had a dog to keep Old Doll out of mischief, all would have been well. But she had none.

The old horse thought that the grass on the other side of the wire fence which surrounded the fields on this portion of the road was sweeter and juicier, and she decided she would like to taste it to see. So she kept nipping the long grass through the fence, getting closer and closer until she stepped right through the lower part of the wire with one metal-shod foot. When she attempted to pull it back, she was unable to do so, consequently she pulled and jerked, which only helped to tighten the wire around her.

The commotion aroused the girls from their story, and when Hetty discovered the poor horse's predicament her heart filled with terror.

"Whatever shall I do?" she cried frantically, rushing to her charge.

The two girls worked and pulled, but it was too much for them. The wires seemed only to draw them-

selves tighter around the poor beast's foot. The old horse was beginning to get restless and she pawed the ground with her free front foot. Hetty knew something must be done, and that without delay.

"If I only had some wire pincers!" she declared. "I'm not sure we have any at the little house, but I'll run back and see. Will you watch her 'till I get back, Lydia?" She flung the question over her shoulder, as she had already started on a run.

"Of course I will, only hurry!" called Lydia after the fast disappearing form, for she was fearful of what the old horse might do.

Hetty tried to appear calm as she rushed into the little house. Father was busy taking a picture of a bride and groom. Hetty thought it must be a bride, for she wore a long veil and stood with her hand on the shoulder of the man, who was seated. She knew that she wouldn't dare disturb her father now, but she didn't know where the pincers were, and there was no time to waste. She must find them at once!

"Father, do we have some wire snippers?" She dared Father's displeasure, but she would have to get them quickly.

"Why, yes, I think so. What do you want with them, child?" he inquired calmly. He did not know what was going on in Hetty's thoughts.

"To cut a wire! I'm in a dreadful hurry!" she replied. "I'll tell you about it when I come back. Lydia is watching Old Doll."

Her father found the pincers for her and she skipped out the door with them and hurried down the road, leaving Father rather bewildered.

"No doubt they are making something," he said to the couple who were posing for their picture, and he went on with his work. He knew Hetty's inventive ability; she was often planning some contrivance.

Hetty ran as fast as she could. What if Old Doll should fall over? What if she should break a leg? She knew only too well what was done to horses that had broken bones. She had never quite forgotten an accident that had happened in front of their apartment in the city more than two years before. The horse that pulled the delivery wagon for Mr. Shafer, their grocer, had fallen on the icy pavement and broken his leg, and the policeman had shot him. Hetty shuddered as she thought of it! What if she were too late?

As she came in sight of Lydia she saw that the horse was still standing, but was stamping the ground with her two free hind feet. She had managed to get the other fore foot entangled, too. The wire was beginning to cut into the poor horse's hide.

"Gee, I'm glad you've got them!" cried Lydia, trembling from her long frightened suspense. "It doesn't matter how much we cut the fence!"

Hetty stopped to pat Old Doll on her quivering nose, "You poor old dear, we'll have you out of here in no time!" she said, but she was not as sure as she sounded. She tried to cut the wire back from the horse's hoof to

loosen the tension, but her small hands were not fitted for so heavy a task. The pincers bruised her tender flesh, but she kept on using all her strength, cutting a little each time, until she succeeded in severing the heavy wire.

Then Lydia helped her cut the wire in several places. She pulled it away as Hetty coaxed the old horse to let her hold her foot up. The horse seemed to know that the girls were trying to help her out of her plight; she calmed down and ceased her stamping.

It took a great deal of work and patient maneuvering, but finally the girls had the old horse free of the wire. They heaved a sigh of relief. They were so glad at their success, that they flung themselves down on the soft grass to rest themselves. Hetty surveyed the havoc they had made of the fence, "What will your father say about it?"

"I know he can fix it up! I'm sure he won't mind when he knows that we saved your horse!" Lydia's words sounded reassuring, but Hetty felt badly about the whole affair. She knew that it would not have happened if she had been more watchful of her charge.

"I'll bet I'll be more careful after this! I'll watch her and read too!" Hetty promised herself. Then she rose and whispered in the old horse's ear, "Poor dear, I'll put some salve on your bruised foot, too!"

After this harrowing experience, the girls were in no mood to continue their reading. Lydia observed that the sun was high up in the sky, which meant that it

must be nearly dinner time. Hetty had not heard the little bell, and she did not know much about telling time by the sun, but a gnawing sensation in the region of her stomach told her that lunch time could not be very far away!

"I'm going to take the cows home," announced Lydia, getting to her feet. "I'm sure it must be dinner time, and I have to go to the grocery in the village for Mother after dinner."

"Stop at the little house, won't you?" begged Hetty. "I want Father to know you."

"I will if Mother will let me," she promised, beginning to round up the cows and start them on their homeward way. Shep felt his responsibility; he ran hither and thither, barking at one, then another until they were all in a small group.

Hetty waited long enough to pet the youngest of the herd, a baby calf only a few weeks old and still looking as if its legs were entirely too long for its small body.

"What do you call her, Lydia?" she asked, stroking her soft silky sides. The animal seemed to like it; she stuck her smooth slick nose right up in Hetty's face.

"I call her Baby Rose, because her mother's name is Rose," explained Lydia.

"And what are the names of the other cows, or are they named?" questioned Hetty.

"Yes, of course, they are all named, else how could we call them?" she replied. "There's Whiteface, the

cow with the big white spot covering most of the space between her eyes; the one with the horn stub is Stump; the yellow one is Bossy. She is named right, too, because she always wants to run them all. Then there is Baby Rose's mother; she is the one that stays close to Baby Rose; Cherry is the red one or as red as a cow can be; Lady Jean is bringing up the rear with Sally and Becca; Becca has only one white foot."

"What a queer name for a cow!" laughed Hetty.

"She's named after my Aunt Rebecca; she was born on her birthday!" explained Lydia. "We call her Becca for short."

Hetty named them after Lydia, pointing to each one in turn, "Whiteface, Stump—I'd call her Stumpy—Bossy, Rose, Baby Rose, Lady Jean, Sally, and Becca, eight in all. Quite a nice family!"

Hetty had overcome the fear she felt when she first saw the cows. Now she would pat them as they came near her. She was still a bit afraid of Bossy, who butted the other cows too much to suit her. She felt that Bossy might give her a shove, too, if she did not be careful.

As the cows started up the long lane with Shep close at their heels, Lydia followed them.

Hetty led Old Doll back to the stable. She turned at Lydia's "Oo-hoo!" and waved to her.

Father was standing in the door of the little house; he smiled at Hetty as she went on to the well next door. After the horse had finished drinking, Hetty

tied her in the stable where the manger was full of sweet-smelling hay. She gave the old horse a final parting pat on the nose. How thankful she was that everything was all right.

Father was waiting with an inquisitive look on his face, and while Hetty prepared the dinner, she told him all about the terrible accident. He insisted that they were very brave girls to get themselves out of trouble without calling for help.

"If you hadn't had a customer, you would have been called, all right, but I couldn't interrupt a bride-and-groom picture, could I?" said Hetty.

Chapter IV

JEREMIAH

Dinner was over and Hetty was doing the dishes when Lydia stopped at the little house carrying a basket of eggs.

"Come in, Lydia!" called Hetty gleefully. "Father, this is Lydia."

Father stood and looked at the little girl so unlike his own. Lydia's hair was light-colored and she was as plump as a partridge, almost fat. Father had always said that Hetty jumped around too much; it made her thin. She was like a frisky squirrel, always on the go.

"I'm glad to know my little girl's playmate," he said. "Won't you sit down?"

"I can't stay. I'm going to the corner grocery for Mother. May Hetty go with me, and then go home with me and stay 'till evening?" she asked.

"I expect so, if she will promise not to get into any mischief!" laughed Father.

Lydia put down her basket and wiped the dishes for Hetty, so they would be ready to start sooner.

"Good-bye!" called the girls to Mr. Burkett as they left the house.

"Be home before dark!" he cautioned Hetty.

"All right, I will," she promised.

The girls went on up the main street with the basket of eggs between them, walking carefully for fear of breaking them. More than once they had to stop a skip in its very beginning, for it might not be safe for the eggs to be jostled too much. They could skip on their way back.

The grocery store was on the corner directly across from the bakery where Hetty had bought the cinnamon cake only the day before.

Mr. Stifel, the grocer, was a thick-set, awkward man. He was short in stature, a trifle bow-legged, but with a look in his hazel eyes that bespoke continued good humor. Hetty liked him at first glance and was sure she would come to his store whenever she needed groceries.

"Hello, boys!" he addressed the girls as they set the

basket on the counter in front of him. "What kin I do fer sich likely chaps?"

Lydia was used to his banter and Hetty did not resent being called a boy; in fact, it had been the one disappointment of her life, that she was a girl, when she would have so much rather been a boy.

While Lydia shopped for groceries in exchange for her eggs, Hetty amused herself looking at everything in sight. This store was quite different from the up-to-date grocery of Mr. Shafer, where they traded in the city. Along the counter the floor was piled with boxes and baskets half-filled with fruits and vegetables. The windows were hung full of advertisements, big glaring ones, in loud colors and huge type. The light shining through them made them as easily readable on the inside as from the street, only of course the letters were backwards.

Hetty thought it was fun to figure out the words. As she read she noticed that most of them were about seeds. She wondered if ever there were vegetables that looked as wonderful as these pictures. She was sure she had never seen any!

Hetty's eyes wandered to a showcase at one side of the room, half-filled with English walnuts, and sprawled on the top of them was a large yellow cat. She supposed the cat liked the feel of the cool nuts. She went over and started to pet the cat, and in turn it started its purring. It sounded just like an engine to Hetty. She felt sure that the cat must like her.

"What do you call your cat, Mr. Stifel?" asked Hetty.

"Isaiah," he answered, watching to see what effect the name would have on Hetty.

Hetty remembered that Isaiah was a name in the Bible so she asked, "Why do you call him Isaiah?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, he's a prophet!" confessed Mr. Stifel.

"A *prophet!*" cried both girls at once.

"Yep, he's the best prophet you ever saw. When it's goin' to rain, he lies on the floor by the door, and when it's goin' to be a dry spell, he crawls in that showcase. I've never known it to fail!" he explained. "I don't need a barometer."

"He's rather a valuable cat then, isn't he?" asked Hetty.

"Yes, I reckon he would be fer some people, but we got more cats than we got anything else!" he replied with a grin.

Lydia was now through with her trading, and the two girls were off down the street, swinging their basket between them. In no time they had reached Lydia's farm.

Never, for a long time, had Hetty had such a wonderful afternoon. The girls raced from one thing to another, for Lydia was as eager to show everything as Hetty was to be shown. Never had she seen so many interesting things; the baby chickens, the tiny pigs, two little colts, six yellow, downy ducks, and what pleased Hetty more than all—ten frisky, playful

lambs; they all came in for a share of frank admiration. Hetty was sure that everything on the farm had babies!

Lydia's mother, a kind, gentle woman, took pains to see that Hetty had a pleasant afternoon, and Hetty immediately fell in love with her. It would be nice to have a real mother, she thought. Girls did not appreciate mothers when they had them. They took them too much for granted. But how she would love to have one of her very own.

Lydia's father and older brother John were in the field getting the ground ready for the corn planting. Hetty went with Lydia to carry them a jug of cold water from the well. They walked across the soft ground of the plowed field. Hetty's low shoes filled with the loose dirt, and she could not walk in them.

"Take them off and carry them!" suggested Lydia who was barefooted as usual.

They sat down in the middle of the plowed field while Hetty removed her shoes.

"This isn't so bad," she said as she gingerly tried out her own bare feet. But when they reached the pasture field she was ready to put the shoes on again. "The sticks tickle my feet," she explained.

When they came back to the house Lydia introduced Hetty to the long rope swing under the apple tree in the orchard, "You get in and I'll push you; then we'll play hand car."

"What's hand car?" asked Hetty excitedly as she settled herself in the swing holding the rope tightly.

"That's when two swing at once, each standing facing each other," explained Lydia as she gave Hetty her first shove.

"Oo-oo-oo! What fun!" cried Hetty joyfully. "I think I'll have to learn to swing sitting first, before I can swing standing up!"

"Is that too high?" asked Lydia, as the swing went higher and higher.

"Don't let it go any higher 'till I get used to it," begged Hetty. "I don't want to fall out, it's too much fun!"

Then Hetty insisted on swinging Lydia, and she could not seem to push her high enough. Her feet even touched a branch of the apple tree, but still she would say, "Higher, Hetty, higher!"

Hetty thought the hand car swing heaps of fun, and she learned how to push herself and go as high as the apple tree limb that Lydia had touched. Never had she enjoyed anything so much!

Lydia's mother came to the door. "Perhaps Hetty would like to help you gather the eggs. You might hunt for stolen nests," she suggested.

"I'd love to!" cried Hetty, slowing up the swing by dragging one foot on the ground.

"Let the old cat die!" exclaimed Lydia.

"What did you say about a cat?" inquired Hetty.

"That's just an old saying; it means let the swing gradually come to a stop of its own accord. Don't stop it," explained Lydia.

"Well, I'm about dead—or I mean the cat is!" laughed Hetty as the swing came to a full stop.

Lydia went into the house for a basket, and the two girls raced to the barn.

The girls gathered all of the eggs in their accustomed places, which almost filled the large wicker basket. Then they set out to discover some new nests.

Sometimes the hens would make a nest away off somewhere in the hay and lay their eggs. If the nest was not found for a long time, the hen would sit on the eggs and hatch baby chicks. The old hen would not wait until all of the eggs were hatched, but would leave her nest as soon as some of the chicks were able to wiggle. The rest of the eggs would not hatch for they would be chilled.

Lydia's father had a standing offer of a penny for each stolen nest she found. She explained this to Hetty and they doubled their efforts.

They climbed up into the haymow and crawled all over the hay in the loft looking for anything that might turn out to be an opening to a nest.

Hetty found a hole in the hay no bigger around than her head, and so far back in the hay that she could not see the end of it. She reached back as far as she could. Then she touched something warm that made her jump!

"Lydia, come here quick; there's an animal or something back in this hole! What can it be?" she cried.

"Where is it?" asked Lydia as she came near.

"Back in this hole. I can barely touch it. It felt like fur. Maybe it's a bear!" laughed Hetty.

"It might be a skunk!" said Lydia. "I'll go easy!"

"What's a skunk?" asked Hetty.

"Well, it's an animal that sprays perfume that you don't like," laughed Lydia. "Some people call them polecats." She stuck her hand in the hole. "I don't feel anything but hay!" she added.

"Stick your head part way in; you can reach farther that way," instructed Hetty, standing back with an expectant look.

Lydia did as she was told and this time she felt something soft and warm. It did not move but Lydia jumped back. "I'll get a pole!" she said as she hurried down the ladder to find one. She was back in a jiffy with a hayfork. She used the handle to stick back in the hole. What was their surprise when the old pussy cat came leisurely out of the hole!

"It was a cat, all right, even if it wasn't a polecat!" laughed Hetty as she jumped around on the hay.

"I'll bet she has her babies in that hole," said Lydia. "Mother wouldn't let her have them in the kitchen; then she took them away and I never could find what had become of them. I'm going to pull some of the hay away so I can reach in farther."

The girls pulled some of the hay from in front of the hole; then Lydia reached in as far as she could. When she pulled out her hand she was holding a black and white kitten.

"Oh, isn't it cute!" cried Hetty excitedly. "How many are there?"

Lydia kept handing them out until there were four cunning baby kittens on the hay in front of the hole. The mother cat stood by watching the procedure. She knew Lydia would not hurt her babies.

"How they have grown!" said Lydia as she petted each one in turn. "They couldn't see when the old cat ran off with them. Now their eyes are as bright as dollars."

"They're almost as big as their mother," laughed Hetty.

"You know I think their mother was pretty smart. She's kept them hidden so we wouldn't chase them away again," declared Lydia.

Hetty was so excited over the kittens that she could not keep her hands off them. She tried to decide which one was the prettiest, but it was no use. They were all beautiful to her. One was black, one was black-and-white spotted, one was tiger-striped, and one was maltese. Four lovely kittens!

"I'd love to have one of the babies!" murmured Hetty as she cuddled them by turns in her arm.

"I'm sure you may have one, or two if you like!" said Lydia generously.

"Are you sure that your mother won't care?" asked Hetty.

"Yes, I'm sure she won't care! She'll be only too glad to be rid of them, for we have two old cats.

Mother was glad when they disappeared. They've been gone a long time," explained Lydia.

"Which one may I have?" inquired Hetty.

"Take your choice," insisted Lydia.

"I think I'll take the tiger-striped one," announced Hetty after much deliberation. "It makes me think of the circus."

"What will you name it?" asked Lydia.

"I believe I'll name him after a prophet like Mr. Stifel's," laughed Hetty. "Do you know any names of prophets?"

"I'm afraid I can't think of any now. We'll ask Mother," declared Lydia.

The girls had lost interest in hunting for stolen nests and decided to go back to the house and tell Mother about the lost kittens, or rather the found kittens, for they weren't lost kittens any more.

"I'm glad we found the kittens!" cried Hetty joyfully. "We were hunting for hens' nests and found a cat's nest!"

Slowly the two girls walked back to the house. Hetty cradled the kitten in one arm and helped Lydia carry the heavy basket of eggs with the other.

"Mother, we found the lost kittens!" announced Lydia.

Mrs. Langdon held the screen door open wide for the girls to come in with their burden. "Where did you find them?" she asked, not as excited as Hetty thought she should be.

Then the girls told her about the hole in the hay.

"Hetty wants one of them, Mother," said Lydia. "You don't care, do you?"

"Certainly not. She is entirely welcome to as many of them as she wants!" replied Mrs. Langdon laughing.

"And do you know any prophet names?" asked Lydia. And when her mother looked rather bewildered she explained, "Hetty wants to name her kitten after a prophet like Mr. Stifel's!"

"And we couldn't think of any," put in Hetty.

"Well, there's Elijah, Isaiah—"

"Mr. Stifel's cat is named Isaiah!" interrupted Hetty.

"Jeremiah, Ezekiel—" continued Mrs. Langdon.

"Jeremiah! That's it! I'll call him Jeremiah!" cried Hetty jubilantly. "And maybe he'll be a prophet like Mr. Stifel's Isaiah!"

Hetty was so happy that the afternoon passed long before she was ready to leave. Lydia's mother insisted on her staying for supper, but Hetty thought it would not be quite fair to allow her father to get his own meal.

As she came in sight of the little house on wheels, she thought how nice it would be if they could have a lovely garden like the Langdon's, and a yard and flowers, too, and a barn! She added that last word as she thought of her new pet. Jeremiah ought to have a barn to play in. She wondered how long Father would be staying in Fort Jefferson. She wouldn't want to leave soon, now that she had found such a lovely playmate.

Chapter V

HETTY HELPS WITH THE PICTURES

The spring days flew fast, each one filled with exciting good times for Hetty. Many days were spent exploring the little town, sometimes with Lydia, and sometimes with only Jeremiah who had replaced Deborah—Hetty's only doll—in her affections.

At first Father had showed his displeasure when Hetty presented her newly acquired pet. "What will you do with it? We have so little room in our little house!" But his heart softened when Hetty replied,

"I'll take all the care of him, honestly I will, Father!"

The Burketts had been in Fort Jefferson less than two weeks, but Father had taken so many pictures that he had allowed Hetty to help with the finishing. He had taught her how to make paste for the mounting. It must be as soft and smooth as strained honey. She would stir and stir until there was not a suggestion of a lump in it. Father declared she made finer paste than he did.

He taught her to help mount the prints on the cards and to rub them down smoothly. He had even allowed her to use the burnisher, which was to give the pictures a gloss, but she had not been very successful with it.

The burnisher had two rollers which were heated by a small alcohol lamp. The pictures were run through between the hot steel rollers. It had to be done quickly. Hetty had scorched one of the prints, because she could not get it through the rollers fast enough.

Father had not scolded her. He said only that she would need to wait until she had grown taller to use the burnisher. She had had to stand on tiptoe to use it. That was one of the reasons for the scorching, she felt sure.

Father insisted that he could not have finished all of the pictures on time, if she had not helped him. Everyone wanted his pictures as soon as possible. People could not wait to see how they looked.

Hetty took great delight in working with the pic-

tures. It didn't seem like work at all. There were so many surprises for her. It was fun to time the prints, then to take them off and put them in a dark box quickly; for they would be ruined if they were exposed to the light even for a second.

Sometimes they printed by sunlight and sometimes by lamplight. Hetty liked to print by sunlight best, for the petrol odor of the printing lamp made her feel queer.

Of course she liked to wash the prints; then she could turn them over in the water and look at them. Always she would be surprised. All sorts of people had had their pictures taken in the Traveling Gallery. There were groups of children dressed all in white with long veils, children who had taken their first communion.

Then there were newly married couples, although they were in the minority. Hetty could not understand why the husband would remain sitting and allow his bride to stand in the picture, but that seemed to be the way they wanted it done.

The babies' pictures interested her most, for she had helped with the taking of them, with the exception of one that Father had taken while she was spending the afternoon with Lydia. So many cunning babies, and just as many proud mothers. The fathers seldom came with them. Hetty supposed they had to stay home and work in the fields, or whatever it was that they did.

One morning Mr. Burkett and Hetty were busy at their pictures when a tall, red-faced man, who said his

name was John Davis, stopped at the little house to ask Father if he would come out in the country and take a family group picture.

He said that his father and mother were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary and they wanted a picture of all of the children and their families. He told Father he would come for him during the noon hour, then they could eat dinner with them. The little black-haired girl was to come too, he said.

When the man had gone Hetty asked, "What's a golden wedding, Father?"

"It means they have been married for fifty years," explained Father. "They are celebrating the day by having all their children and grandchildren home to spend the day with them. At noon they will have a big dinner."

"May I take Jeremiah?" asked Hetty hopefully.

"I'm afraid you'd better not," answered her father.

"He'll get so lonesome here by himself!" pleaded Hetty.

"Well, take him along then, but mind that he doesn't get into any mischief!" warned Father.

Hetty was so pleased she hardly knew how to express herself. She was as excited about going to the country as a mother hen is with her first baby chicks. She fluttered around the little house, hopping first on one foot, then on the other, until Father declared she would wear out her shoes.

She had not yet learned to go barefooted. The rough

stones and sharp sticks bruised her tender feet. She laughed when Father said she would wear out her shoes. "I'll go barefoot then, as Lydia does!" she said.

At last Mr. Davis drove up to the little house. His horse, a beautiful bay, held his head up very high. Hetty thought it must indeed be uncomfortable to the horse to have to hold its head up high in the air. Hetty felt that she would like to loosen the rein a bit. Old Doll was always reined moderately. Father said she could pull easier that way. Hetty felt sorry for the horse; it made her head hurt to watch him.

The carriage, too, was splendid, either quite new or with a shiny new coat of paint, for it glistened in the sun.

Hetty climbed in with Jeremiah and settled herself on the back seat with the kitten cuddled on her lap, while Father stowed the camera and tripod on the seat beside her. Then he sat with the driver.

Mr. Davis spoke to the horse and it started at a lively trot. It reminded Hetty of the race horses she had seen at the fair. It had long legs and a slender body, and moved along so gracefully that Hetty felt sure it could go as fast as a racer.

The men talked as they rode. Their conversation drifted back to Hetty and she listened intently. They were discussing the country, the weather, the crops, and many things that Hetty wanted to know about.

Each day she realized more and more that she knew less and less about the country. Lydia had helped her

a great deal by explaining things to her, and Hetty in turn had told Lydia many things about the city which she did not know.

The ride was entirely too short to suit Hetty who was enjoying every minute of it, although she had not spoken a word since the carriage started. Jeremiah too, must have received a certain amount of pleasure from the ride, for he had been purring at top speed since the ride began.

They drew up before a neat-looking farmhouse, all shiny white with green shutters at every window. The barn and outbuildings were as red as the tulips that grew in a diamond-shaped bed near the house.

Hetty thought this the dearest house she had ever seen. How she would like to have even a cottage like that for her very own, with flowers in the yard, and a garden. That was one thing that they lacked in the little house on wheels, no flowers and no garden. For, of course, they couldn't take a yard and garden with them wherever they went.

The dinner had been placed on a long table out in the yard under the shade of an old oak tree. Benches lined each side of the table and chairs the ends. The table was full of an abundance of food of all kinds. Hetty had never seen so much food in one place before. Surely they could never eat as much as that!

Father informed Mr. Davis that he thought it would be best to take the picture before eating. He laughed, "I think the family will look pleasanter!"

They all agreed, and Father proceeded to line them up according to their size, so as to get them all in a small group, or in as small a space as possible; men and women in the back row, the larger children in the row in front of them, and the small children in the front row. Grandfather and Grandmother Davis sat on chairs in front of the group. Grandfather held Billy, the only great-grandson, on his knee, but he wriggled worse than a fishworm about to be baited. He clapped his hands and squirmed to be let down. Grandfather was holding on to him with both hands, but he was having a sorry time of it.

Father put the black cloth over his head and focussed the camera; then he moved some of the children closer together. He looked in again to be sure everything was just right. He put the cloth over Hetty's head and allowed her to look in the camera at the picture. "They're standing on their heads!" she cried delightedly.

Father was watching Billy. He knew that he would spoil the picture if he continued his restlessness.

"Hetty," said Father, "see if you can keep Billy quiet while I snap the picture."

Hetty, with Jeremiah in her arms, stood nearer Billy and smiled at him.

"Kitty, kitty," cried Billy, wriggling more than ever and trying to free himself so that he might get the precious kitten.

Then Hetty put Jeremiah into Billy's outstretched

hands and showed him how to hold the kitten without hurting it.

"That's fine, Hetty. Back up!" cried Father, waving wildly, for Billy had become so absorbed in watching the kitten that he forgot to wiggle.

Hetty stepped out of range of the camera. Then Father took off the little black cap in front of the camera for just a second. He turned the plateholder over quickly and snapped another picture. He took two more so he would be sure of having one that would be fine.

"All over!" he called as he snapped the little cap in place again.

"Now for dinner!" called Grandfather Davis. "Everyone sit down, there's a place for all of you."

And the family was not slow to follow the old gentleman's instructions.

A man with a long-tailed coat, who Hetty thought was the preacher, stood up and in a deep voice thanked God for the food set before them. Then the meal began.

There was a special place at the table for Mr. Burkett and Hetty, and they might have been a king and a princess, for the royal manner in which they were served.

Hetty had her eyes on Billy during the meal, and she could hardly wait until it was finished to play with him. She hoped he had sat still in the picture. She felt sure Jeremiah had.

What a lively little fellow Billy was! He was just

learning to walk, and could say a few easy words. He smiled openly at Hetty. There were other boys and girls of all ages and sizes, but they stared at her with unfamiliar faces.

Billy made friends with her at once. Hetty walked around the yard with his hand held tightly in her own. He did very well walking as long as she held his hand, but toppled over when she let go of him to get a better hold of Jeremiah. She was afraid to let the cat down; she thought he might run off to the barn and she would have trouble finding him. Billy laughed as he rolled over in the soft grass. He thought it heaps of fun and gurgled his delight.

Hetty was having such a lovely time with Billy that she was sorry when Father said they must start back to the little house.

Mr. Davis drove them back in the same shiny carriage with the same spirited horse, and again Hetty was sorry when the drive was ended.

Chapter VI

IN CHURCH WITH LYDIA

The following day was Sunday. Hetty was to go with Lydia to Sunday School in the beautiful church with the high-reaching spire. She tidied up the little house with lightning-like speed, shut Jeremiah up in his little box with the slats on top. She put on her one best dress, a blue one just the color of her azure eyes.

She and Father had always had a joke about the dress-up dress. When she would ask him jokingly, "What dress shall I wear today?" he would reply very soberly, "Wear your new one, or your blue one, or the one you look the best in!"

Of course it was one and the same dress, but they would pretend that she had an elaborate wardrobe.

This morning Father had answered as usual, so Hetty said, "I'll wear my blue one today!"

The white moiré sash that went with the blue dress was quite long and Hetty had difficulty making a presentable bow. Either the bow ends were too long, or when she would even up the bow ends, the other ends were too long. At last she gave up in despair. "Please, Father, will you tie my sash?" she asked. "I can't seem to make it come out even."

Hetty gave her shoes a final brushing just as Lydia's "Oo-hoo!" sounded at the door of the little house.

"Come in, Lydia," she called. "I'll be ready in a jiffy!"

"How nice you look!" approved Lydia, as she surveyed Hetty's big bow sash. Her own was neither as large nor as crisp-looking.

"What shall I take for the collection?" inquired Hetty.

"Only a penny for Sunday School," she replied, "for church as much as you like."

Father had said that he would come later to the church service and walk home with the girls. He had an appointment to take a picture before church. Father did not like to take pictures on Sunday. Work done on that day rarely turned out well. Something nearly always happened to it, or to him while he was doing it. But Father felt that he must try to accommodate the public and he took pictures by appointment on Sunday.

The bell was ringing loud and full as the two girls,

looking very fine in their Sunday clothes, neared the church.

The church, which was the only one in Fort Jefferson, was situated on a large plot back of the main street, almost a block from Mr. Stifel's grocery. It was not on a street at all, but it had smooth white sidewalks the whole length of the church lot, with wide steps leading up to the beautiful double-door entrance.

The church steeple was tall and imposing in the early morning sunlight. Hetty thought it looked even grander than any that she remembered in the city. It stood out by itself and seemed so alone.

There were many horses tied to the long hitching racks on the sides and rear of the churchyard, with many different kinds of vehicles attached to them, buggies, carriages, and spring-wagons.

Some of them were old and quite dilapidated, and many of them were shiny new. Their owners were filing up the long steps to the church doors. Groups of children were seen coming in different directions.

Inside of the doors was a long corridor, and there were other doors leading to the different divisions of the church. Lydia led the way through the doors on down the stairs on the inside to the Sunday School rooms below. Hetty followed and sat down beside her.

Nearly all of the long pews were filled, with here and there a vacancy where a boy sat next to a girl. Hetty had not expected to see such a crowd in the church. Surely there were not that many people in all

Fort Jefferson. But when she stopped to think she supposed they came from the country round about. This was truly a church-going community.

Father had said it was a beautiful church, but Hetty was not prepared for the grandeur of the interior. Its beauty filled her with a quiet sense of peace and well being.

After the opening exercises, Hetty followed Lydia into a small room curtained off from a much larger one. There the teacher, a sweet-faced, middle-aged woman, taught the lesson.

Deborah! Hetty had seen the name in the Bible and had named her doll for her, but there were so many big names in the Book of Judges that she had not been able to get the whole story of Deborah quite clear. The teacher made it plain and equally interesting.

What a character Deborah was! The mouthpiece of God! She was both loyal and courageous. Hetty felt that she would like to grow up to be as brave and helpful as Deborah.

The instructive lesson was over much too soon to suit Hetty. Just then the chimes sounded, which Lydia told her was the signal for the church service.

The big organ was playing so softly that Hetty thought she had never heard any music half so sweet. She listened to the choir and wished they might go on singing forever; it made her feel so cool and restful. The sermon did not interest her, but she spent the time looking at the lovely art glass windows.

Hetty's eyes wandered about the church. They caught a glimpse of the form of her father several rows in front of her.

At the close of the service, Father met the girls in the corridor. The congregation was busy greeting each other. Father had to stop many times to shake hands with some of them. Many of them had remembered him years before when he had been a teacher in their village. Some had to inform Father who they were, as many of them were so small when he knew them.

The pastor, who had changed his gown for a more informal coat, shook hands warmly with both Hetty and her father and seemed pleased to see them. Hetty thought it was splendid of the people to be so friendly and interested in them. How different it had been at their church in the city. There people hurried out after the service.

Here the people lingered and talked about the crops, or the weather, or the people who had not been able to come to the service. Even those who had never known the Burketts stopped for a friendly word of greeting. Hetty felt somehow that she had always belonged here.

As Father and the girls walked on their way back to the little house, they talked of the people of the village. Father asked Lydia many questions about them. Lydia was to stay to dinner with them as her family was spending the day with a sick aunt several miles away.

Hetty found two aprons, one for Lydia and one for herself. While Lydia set the table, Hetty lit the stove and put the potatoes on to boil. She had peeled them in the morning and put them in cold water.

While the potatoes boiled she fried the fresh beefsteak she had bought at Mr. Stifel's store. She used the meat fryings to make some good rich gravy.

Father liked her gravy. He said she could make better gravy than a chef at a hotel. She would mash the potatoes, too. Father liked them better that way.

The meal was ready in record time, or so it seemed to Father, who had been watching the two lively girls as they bustled around the little house. He brought a bucket of water from the well and the meal began.

Hetty watched Father closely. He was not eating as he should. He seemed not in the least hungry, while Hetty and Lydia were almost starved. They ate like a couple of woodchoppers.

Hetty thought she would insist on Father going to the doctor here in Fort Jefferson. She had seen a sign on Main Street which read M. A. PEEBLES, GENERAL PRACTITIONER.

"What does it mean?" she had asked Lydia.

"It means 'doctor,' " replied Lydia.

"Why doesn't it say 'doctor' then?" retorted Hetty.

"Perhaps it sounds bigger that way!" laughed Lydia.

Hetty made up her mind before the meal was over that she would try to get Father to go to the doctor before the day was finished.

After the dinner the girls washed the dishes and made the little house neat and clean. Then Jeremiah came in for his share of the meal. Hetty had learned to keep him shut up in his box while they were eating, for once he had jumped right upon the table and landed in a dish of custard.

Father had said then that she would have to keep him off the table or give him away. Father was not very fond of the kitten and only put up with it for Hetty's sake. She was quite careful of Jeremiah after that.

She had asked Mr. Stifel, the grocer, for a box. He had given her a nice, smooth pine box that had been filled with oranges and still retained the sweet pungent odor of the Florida fruit. Hetty had put an old worn sweater of Father's in the bottom of the box and nailed slats on the top to keep him in. She took him out for feeding and for his morning airing.

Now the girls took Jeremiah out of his cozy home and watched him as he lapped up the rich, creamy milk. Then they spent the greater part of the afternoon playing with him. They dressed him up in Deborah's clothes and played house with the kitten as the child.

Jeremiah was not fond of this, for it interfered with his walking. The clothes would get in the way and over he would roll. Hetty said he acted like a baby learning to walk. The rest of the afternoon was spent looking at the finished pictures of the day before.

Lydia thought it was fun to see the pictures of people she knew, before they themselves saw them.

Hetty walked a little way with Lydia on her way home that evening. She had to be home in time to help with the milking. On the way Hetty confided to Lydia her fears about her father, as they walked quite slowly to the very end of the long lane.

"Don't worry! I'm sure everything will be all right!" consoled Lydia as Hetty started back to the little house.

Father met her down the road, and before she had time to tell him she wanted him to go to see the doctor, he said, "I'm not feeling so well today. I think I'll stop at Dr. Peebles' and have him look me over."

And when Hetty stared in amazement, he added, "Do you want to go with me?"

"Of course I do," she replied. She had not thought it would be that easy.

So, while Father consulted Dr. Peebles in his private office, Hetty sat in an old rocker in the dusty outer room of the doctor's suite. She wondered if he didn't have anyone to keep his rooms clean.

How she would like to tidy up a bit. She had a notion to do some "handkerchief dusting," but just then the words of the doctor came to her quite clearly, "Do you know anything about trucking?"

She heard her father reply, "I should, I was brought up on a farm!"

"What you ought to do, is to get yourself a small

place, say a couple of acres, raise some chickens and vegetables, keep a cow or two, and drink lots of milk. Keep out of doors as much as you can. That, I think, would be the solution of everything. But I won't answer for the results, if you don't!" The doctor's words seemed to get louder as he talked.

"I don't see just how I will be able to do it!" confessed Father. "Nearly all I have is tied up in my picture business!"

"But I'm sure you could rent some place, at least until you are able to go on with the pictures," argued the doctor.

As the doctor became less insistent, Hetty could not distinguish the words. It was only a subdued murmur, but Hetty had heard enough to confirm her fears.

Quietly they walked back to the little house on wheels. Hetty did not talk for fear of bubbling over with tears and Father was busy with his thoughts.

Chapter VII

SHEP SAVES THE DAY

Monday was a busy day in the little studio on wheels. There were several pictures taken and much finishing to be done. Hetty had little time to worry about her father's health. She wished she could do more of the work, although he insisted that she was doing too much now.

After the busy spurt of Monday, there was not much to do the remainder of the week, so Hetty and Lydia planned to go fishing on Thursday. Father urged them

to go. He said he would not need Hetty then. He would like to go too, he said, only he would need to stay at the studio to take care of a possible customer.

He helped them dig for fishworms in the back of the lot. It had rained in the night and worms were not hard to find. Big fat ones wriggled out of the soft earth that Father turned over with the shovel he had borrowed next door.

Lydia vied with Hetty to see who could pick up the most worms and deposit the squirming creatures in an old tin can half-filled with moist earth. Hetty was so anxious to drop hers that she usually missed the can. She did not like the feel of the clammy cold angleworms.

Father had helped them get their fishing tackle in shape, too. Lydia had two long bamboo poles that they would get when they stopped for the lunch that her mother had prepared for them.

"Remember, I'll expect fish for supper!" laughed Father.

"We'll try to have some!" answered the girls in unison, as they swung off down the road. It was only a short way from Lydia's home across the field to the canal where they were going to try their luck at fishing.

Shep came bounding up to meet them as if to say, "I'm going fishing with you, so don't try to stop me!"

They collected the poles and the lunch basket, and were soon ready to start.

"Mother, shut Shep in his kennel, so he doesn't fol-

low us!" Lydia called back when Shep started to go with them.

Mother was standing at the kitchen door. "Why don't you want him to go with you?" she asked.

"He'll bark and scare all the fish!" pouted Lydia.

"I don't think he will, Lydia. I'll feel safer if you take him with you," assured her mother.

"Let him go along, Lydia," coaxed Hetty, who had begun to be quite fond of the beautiful collie.

"Oh, well, all right, but the first bark and home you go," warned Lydia.

Shep sensed that he was to be allowed to go with the girls, so he bounded on, keeping several yards ahead of them. He would stop until the girls had almost caught up with him, and then he would race off over the field as much as to say, "Don't you wish you could travel like that?"

Soon they were at the canal, which spread out before them like a blue ribbon, curving pleasantly into the distance. Willow trees grew along either side, affording a shady spot for any chance angler, and a refuge for the wild birds that were at that very moment filling the air with their sweetest melodies. Hetty had to stand still and enjoy their music for a while.

Lydia was the first to have her hook baited and thrown into the water. She offered to help Hetty put the wriggling earthworm on her hook, but Hetty argued that she would have to learn sometime.

"If it weren't so slippery!" she cried.

"Slap it between your hands!" directed Lydia. "They don't squirm quite so much then."

Hetty obeyed. She agreed that it did help the wriggling, but the worm was just as slick and slimy as ever.

Lydia gave a jerk. Something was on the end of her line. In her haste to get her line out of the water she had thrown it some distance back of them. When she investigated she found she had caught a crawfish.

"Just an old crawdad!" she cried disgustedly. "But I'll fix him, I'll use him for bait."

"How can you do that?" inquired Hetty, amazed at Lydia's knowledge of angling.

"Use his tail. It makes excellent bait for catfish," she explained, as she quickly tore off the tail and skillfully put it on her empty hook. "Now watch me catch one!"

Hetty's cork began bobbing around, but she jerked too soon and lost the fish, or whatever it was that had been nibbling at her bait. She threw in again, as far out as her line would permit. The circular ripples that the cork made widened out gradually until the water was perfectly still. Some feathery snake-feeders flew just over the surface of the water, often alighting on either Lydia's or Hetty's cork, which made them bob ever so little.

Shep had not so much as suggested a bark. He had disappeared when they reached the water and seemed to know that he was not needed to help with the fishing.

Everything was quiet! For the moment the birds had stopped their warbling. The wind was still, so still

that not a leaf moved in its place. Hetty felt the quiet steal through her. How she loved it all!

After a long time of patient waiting, or what seemed a long time to Lydia, who had her mind set on catching some fish for Mr. Burkett's supper, she pulled out a fish which seemed to her to be a big one, although it barely exceeded the minimum size for catfish.

Hetty became excited. "If I can only catch one!" she cried.

All at once her cork bobbed up and down and then disappeared under the water. Lydia had seen it, too. "Pull, Hetty, pull! You have a bite!" she cried.

Hetty gave a jerk and there on the line dangling in mid-air was a small snapper turtle.

"That's a queer fish!" laughed Hetty as she tried to unfasten the turtle from the line. "I can't even get him off the hook. I think he's swallowed it."

Lydia came to the rescue and together they succeeded in pulling the hook out of the turtle's mouth.

"I'll bet that hurts the poor thing. I wish I hadn't caught him. He's bleeding, too," moaned Hetty.

"If he were larger, we'd make soup out of him, but he's much too small for that. I think we might as well throw him back into the water. He'll be all right in no time," consoled Lydia.

"Let's do!" urged Hetty, and she proceeded to fling the unsuspecting turtle in the middle of the quiet stream. He disappeared from sight as a little black wriggling form.

"Hetty, pull! Your cork went under!"

A dinner bell ringing in the distance brought the girls to a realization of their hunger. They had been too busy to think about food.

They spread the little white cloth on the ground in the shade of one of the big willow trees that lined the canal and placed the lunch on its snowy fold.

Shep, who had been lying under the willows asleep, seemed to smell the food, for he got up and stretched himself, and came over to the girls as if to say, "You won't forget me, will you?"

Hetty thought she had never tasted anything so delicious as the chicken sandwiches Mrs. Langdon had included in their lunch. Shep liked them, too, for the girls shared them with him. He sat watching every bite that the girls took, hoping for another for himself. He sat looking so longingly at them that Lydia gave him the second sandwich, for as she said, "He's been extra good, and he must have extra food!"

And they both laughed and continued to feed him until the entire lunch had disappeared. Shep appeared to be satisfied. He walked off again to his former retreat under the willows.

"That's what I like about a picnic, there are no dishes to wash!" Lydia announced triumphantly as the two girls cleared away the remains of the lunch.

"I never had a picnic before, but I like everything about them—that is, if they are all like this one," said Hetty.

Soon the girls were back at their fishing. Hetty sat

on the bank patiently waiting for a nibble. She hoped she could catch a fish, too. She had never caught a fish in her whole life. She was beginning to think it was hopeless. Her eyes hurt when she watched the cork so constantly.

The sun shining on the water made it worse. The water acted as a mirror, reflecting the rays of the sun directly in her eyes. They began to water and she could hardly see the cork. She looked away into the green woods across the canal to rest her eyes. All at once something jerked on her pole. It almost fell out of her hands.

Lydia, who had been watching the corks, cried, "Hetty, pull! Your cork went under!"

Hardly knowing what she was doing, she pulled with all her might, and sure enough, there on the end of her line was a beautiful crappie. She could hardly believe her eyes! It had all happened so quickly. She had pulled with such force that the line with the fish dangling on the end, caught on the limb of a tree near them.

"What a beauty! What a beauty!" exclaimed Lydia excitedly, dropping her own pole to help Hetty with her first catch.

"And to think I caught it!" cried Hetty who was still numb with the thrill of it. "I love to fish!"

The girls succeeded in untangling the line from the branch of the tree. Hetty was afraid to take the fish off the hook, although Lydia showed her how.

"I'm afraid I'll hurt it!" she explained.

Lydia took the crappie off the hook and put it on the stringer with her own fish. It made her fish look like a baby. She laughed at the comparison, "I'm afraid your fish will eat my fish up!" But it was only a few minutes until Lydia caught one equally as large as Hetty's, and the fun began in earnest.

It seemed that the girls took turns pulling out fish. It kept them busy baiting the hooks for a while. As fast as they could throw in they would have a bite; and then all at once the biting stopped, and they could not get even a nibble.

"There must have been a school of fish swimming by," said Lydia. "They've stopped biting now."

"Can we wait until school opens again?" laughed Hetty.

Although they sat and waited patiently for another half hour, neither of the girls got so much as a nibble at their bait. They were beginning to be tired, for it isn't any fun fishing without a bite. They decided that they had enough fish for one time anyway.

Lydia insisted on giving Hetty all of them. "They'll make a good supper for you and your father, but they wouldn't be a taste for all of us. We have fish often anyway."

Hetty accepted them gladly, for she knew her father's liking for fresh fish, and she felt they might tempt his appetite which had been lagging in the past week.

The two girls were winding up their lines chatting away when they heard a strange disturbance. Behind

them an angry farmer brandished a cane, muttering imprecations as he approached, "Git out o' here in a hurry! Don't you know that this is my land and yer trespassin'? I'll have you arrested, you vagabonds!"

Lydia recognised the intruder as a neighbor who lived on the back road. She knew that he claimed to own the canal, and her heart filled with terror. The fact that the land was owned by the government did not lessen Lydia's fear of the man, although she knew that he had no more claim to it than she had.

Hetty was even more frightened than Lydia for she thought he might really have them arrested. Both girls trembled so that they could scarcely get their things together as they prepared for flight. Nearer and nearer came the man, anger showing plainly in his eyes and his upraised arm.

Just then Shep came out of his hiding place in the willows and rushed at the interloper with a defiant bark. The stranger turned and hurriedly quit the premises without even once looking back.

Shep followed him until he jumped the fence in his haste to be out of reach of the dog. Then Shep, realizing that they were rid of him, came back to the girls wagging his tail for their approval.

"Good old Shep! You're a peach," praised Lydia. "What would we have done without you!" And she put her arms around the collie's woolly neck and hugged him close.

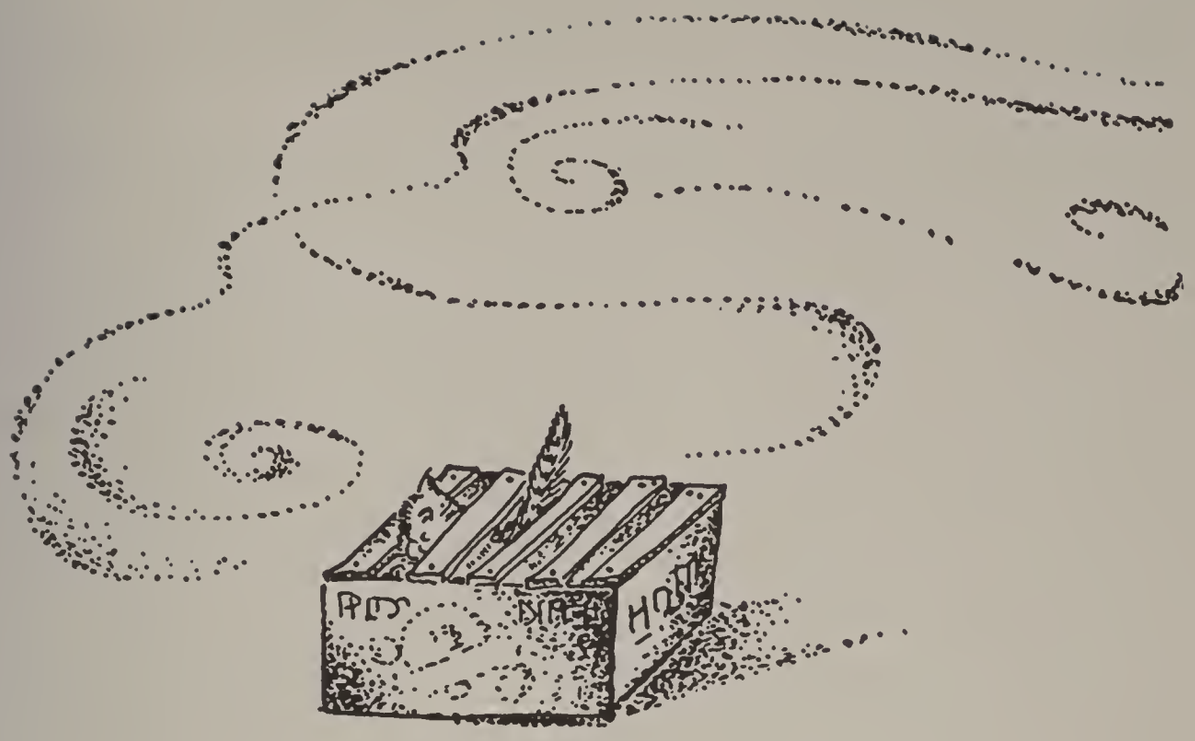
But not until the man was out of sight did the two

girls breathe easily. Then Lydia explained to Hetty about the neighbor who thought he owned the canal and all the land bordering on it.

"He doesn't really. I suppose he thought I didn't know any better, but I was afraid of him. He wouldn't have dared say anything if some one older were with us," insisted Lydia.

"I'm mighty glad he's gone!" cried Hetty. "I hope I never see him again!"

Father was delighted with the fish and with Lydia for sending him her share of them. That evening they had a real feast. Hetty was pleased to see her father eat with something of his former appetite. During the meal she entertained him with a recital of their adventures of the afternoon. She laughed as she told him about the angry farmer. It was amusing to her now that she was safe at home.



Chapter VIII

GOOD-BYE, FRIENDLY VILLAGE

For a whole week there was so little to do with pictures that Hetty found time to do a number of interesting things after the housekeeping was finished. She had made many friends in the village and she divided her time among them.

When she was not at Lydia's, or when Lydia was too busy at home to come down to the little house, she would take Jeremiah and spend long hours with the children of the village. Some of them were ragged and not too clean, but Hetty loved them all.

Sometimes she would play school with the group. Always she was chosen as the teacher which pleased her

not a little as that was the one great desire of her heart—to be a teacher when she grew up.

One morning when her duties were finished, she took Jeremiah in her arms and started down the main street of the little town in search of adventure. The sun was shining hot through the leaves of the trees that lined either side of the street; and scarcely any air was moving, so Hetty kept in the shade of the huge elms. As she was passing Mr. Stifel's grocery she caught a glimpse of his stout form through the doorway. He called to her, "Hetty, where are you goin' with that feline quadruped? Is that the one I gave you a box fer? Come in and let me look him over!"

Hetty was just in the mood to listen to one of his inimitable talks. So she opened the screen door and entered the grocery, empty except for Mr. Stifel and his own cat, Isaiah.

At sight of the strange cat Jeremiah puffed himself up and jumped out of Hetty's restraining arms, landing full on the bigger cat. Isaiah utterly ignored Jeremiah as if he had been a fly that had taken a moment to light. Whereupon the visiting kitten began to spit and prance around as if he were determined to make himself seen.

"Well, I'll be darned! If that don't beat you," laughed Mr. Stifel. "That mite of a kitten trying to pick a fight out of one triple his size!"

When Jeremiah found that he could not prevail on the older cat to start a scrap, he changed his tactics and began trying to play with him. The playful mood won

where the fighting attitude failed and soon they were rolling over each other on the floor having a grand time.

"What do you call this here specimen of pugilistic art?" asked Mr. Stifel jokingly.

"Jeremiah," replied Hetty trying to hide a grin, for she didn't want him to think she had named her cat after a prophet just to make fun of his own.

"Well, as I live, if we ain't got another prophet in town! What does he prophesy?" he asked.

"Nothing yet, I guess, unless it's trouble. He's been the forerunner of his share of that!" explained Hetty as she recited some of the scrapes he had been in. "Father won't let me keep him unless I put him in his box when he is in the house. He's ruined several pictures and seems to think everything is made for him to play with!"

Mr. Stifel had known Hetty's father when he taught school in Fort Jefferson a long time ago. Now he started off on a yarn about some things that had happened then.

Hetty liked nothing better than stories, especially if there was some truth in them, so when he had finished she begged him to tell another.

"Did I ever tell you about the Hunted House?" he inquired.

"No, I'm sure you didn't. Is it a ghost story?" asked Hetty.

"No, it isn't a ghost story. I said *hunted,* not *haunted,*" laughed Mr. Stifel good-naturedly. "You see it was this way. The old man who lived in the cottage that was afterwards known as the Hunted House, was rather

eccentric and was reported to be quite wealthy. People told that he hid money at various times about the house and promptly forgot where he hid it.

"The neighbors and the few servants that he had, told of many queer searching parties about the house. When the old gentleman needed some extra change, he would set the servant to hunt for some, and it was reported that the hunt was always successful.

"But there came a time when many hunts were instigated without the least success. When the old man died, leaving barely enough in the bank to pay the funeral needs, the lawyer who was named to handle the estate hunted the house over but he found not a copper.

"The small farm was willed to a great-nephew who was the nearest living relative. He came to look after his estate and hearing the tales about hidden coins, instituted a rather extensive search on his own account, but he too was doomed to disappointment. Finally this heir left the small farm in the hands of a real estate dealer to sell and he went back to New York.

"After that the place was overrun with thieves, or maybe they were just prying people trying to find some of the hidden money. The man who has the place to sell boarded up the windows and the doors to keep intruders out. But no one has bothered it lately. I guess they have given up trying to find anything."

Hetty had a dozen questions ready to spring, but just then some customers came in to buy groceries. She decided she had better run home for it must be near dinner

time, as the customers seemed to be in a hurry. She determined to come again soon and ask him more about the Hunted House.

She slipped out of the grocery and hurried back to the little house. She noticed that the sign ART GALLERY was missing from the front of the picture wagon, and she felt as though a cloud had drifted over the bright sun that was shining.

Father was bustling about the studio doing nothing that Hetty could make head or tail of. But later she noticed he had the big box out and was packing the camera very carefully with excelsior and tissue paper wrappings.

Hetty waited for him to explain, but she knew in advance that it meant "Good-bye, Friendly Village," and she could hardly keep the tears from brimming over. She had feared it for several days, but she would not allow herself to think about it. There would be time enough when it happened, she thought.

At the dinner table Father suddenly announced, "We will be leaving in the morning, Hetty. Business seems to be finished here. We'll go on to Timberville."

"How far is it?" inquired Hetty, making conversation to try and keep from showing her great disappointment.

"It's a full day's journey from here," he replied. "We must get up early in the morning and get a good start."

"May I go and tell Lydia good-bye this evening?" she asked.

"Of course you may. Wouldn't you rather go this af-

ternoon? Then we can get to bed early tonight and have a long rest and be ready for a hard day tomorrow," suggested Father.

"Yes, I would," she answered, thinking how much longer she could stay at Lydia's.

"You go now, and I will do the dishes and tidy up the house. That will give you a long afternoon," he announced.

"And I'll take Jeremiah along so he can say good-bye to his mother and the family," she declared.

"That's very thoughtful of you, Hetty. Maybe his mother won't want him to go so far away. In that case don't hesitate to leave him with his relatives!" laughed Father.

But Hetty did not think it much of a joke. She was not in a joking mood, but she managed to grin at her father as she left the little house. Then she resumed her thoughts which were not happy ones. Just when she was having such wonderful times, they would have to move.

But business was over here and she knew that her father must move on to a new town and new people so that he could make a living. He had been very successful in this little town, but business was business.

Hetty wondered as she walked on her way to Lydia's what the new town would be like. Would she find likeable playmates there, too? But of course she would! How foolish of her to even question it, yet she doubted if she would find one to take Lydia's place.

Lydia met her at the gate, "Gee, I'm glad you came! I have to drive the horse this afternoon and I won't mind if you're here; you can ride the horse," she announced.

And so it was that the two girls spent one of their happiest afternoons, even if it was their last. Hetty thought it would be better to tell Lydia just before leaving, and not to spoil a perfectly good afternoon, so when the time came to go home she found it very hard to say. The words seemed stuck in her throat.

Finally she blurted out, "We're leaving Fort Jefferson in the morning, Lydia!" And two tears welled up and made their way down her cheeks followed by a regular stream.

"Leaving! In the morning!" cried Lydia, not trying to hide her surprise and disappointment.

"Ye-es," sobbed Hetty openly.

Lydia knew that the little house and its occupants would leave some time, but she had not figured on anything as abrupt as this, and she was fairly stumped. Tears filled her eyes and she could not hide her grief.

"I'll write to you when we get to the new town," promised Hetty, trying to cheer Lydia up, forgetting her own sorrow for a moment at sight of her friend's.

"Please do," said Lydia, swallowing hard to keep back the tears. "And I promise to answer it by return mail!"

"You sound like a mail order catalog!" laughed Hetty.

That broke the tension of grief at the parting, at least for the moment, then the girls made their vows to keep

up their friendship as long as they lived, and maybe some day they would see each other again.

They captured Jeremiah in the yard where he was rolling and tumbling with his few remaining brothers and sisters. The mother cat was looking on apparently in deep thought and extremely proud of her family now that her stray one had come home.

Lydia walked with Hetty carrying Jeremiah, and by the time they had reached the end of the lane, the girls were both in their usual good humor.

"Good-bye, Hetty! Good-bye! Good-bye, Jeremiah! Good-bye, little house! Tell your father good-bye for me, too!" sang Lydia.

"Good-bye, Lydia, and don't forget to answer my letters!" warned Hetty.

Shep, who had followed them down the lane and was trying to chase a squirrel some distance from them, seemed to sense something different and unusual in their parting, for he came bounding up and almost knocked Hetty over in his greeting.

"It's about time you came to say good-bye, Shep. I thought you'd forgotten me!" said Hetty as she buried her face in his soft ruff and hugged him close.

"I almost forgot to give you Jeremiah," said Lydia as she handed him over.

"I almost forgot him, too!" laughed Hetty.

Hetty awoke the next morning to the sound of the drip, drip, of the gentle rain, and she realized that she didn't mind half so much leaving in the rain. She liked

nothing better than riding in the rain. Besides, there wasn't much she could do by herself in the little house except play with Jeremiah, and he appeared so sleepy and lazy that Hetty felt that the day would have been lost anyway.

Not for a long time had they eaten such an early breakfast, or one that they had so thoroughly enjoyed. Hetty knew that getting up before sunrise gave one an extra appetite.

Soon they were traveling down the road, with Friendly Village disappearing in the distance. The sorrow of leaving her friends was soon forgotten in her keen anticipation of the new town.

"What did you say it was called, Father?" she asked.

"Timberville," he answered.

"Timberville! What a queer name! It must be full of trees. Is it as big as Fort Jefferson?" she inquired.

"Yes, I think perhaps it is a bit larger if anything," replied her father.

Before they had gone a mile the rain stopped suddenly, and the sun, which was just peeping over the horizon, broke through the few remaining clouds in all its golden splendor. In the west, silhouetted against the bright blue of the sky, was a gorgeous rainbow.

"Look, Father, a rainbow! Isn't it lovely?" cried Hetty delightedly, for she thought she had never seen anything quite so beautiful.

"Rainbow at night, sailor's delight; rainbow in the morning, the sailor's warning!" sang Father.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Hetty.

"Just what it says. There is liable to be a storm on the sea when there is a rainbow in the morning," explained her father.

"I see, but it doesn't look like a storm here, does it?" she asked.

"No, it looks as if we might have a fine day now," answered Father. "And I'm glad, too. I don't like to have Old Doll out in the rain for long."

The air smelled so fresh and sweet after the rain that Hetty took great deep breaths of it, feeling that she could never get enough of its spring freshness. It was good to be alive on such a morning, and Hetty felt that she was a lucky girl to have more surprises ahead. So she settled herself to enjoy the ride and to miss nothing along the highway.

Chapter IX

A NEW TOWN

The Traveling Gallery and its occupants had gone less than two miles from Fort Jefferson when they came upon a cottage set back a short distance from the main road at the end of a short lane. Its windows were boarded up and nearly covered by a lovely green vine which extended the full length of the front of the house. On the fence surrounding the yard was a square board sign with huge letters FOR SALE, which explained in two words the untenanted air of the deserted-looking place.

Father stopped the old horse and climbed down from the wagon seat, "I'm going to investigate. You watch Old Doll," he said.

He swung up the short length of lane and disappeared around the house.

Hetty's thoughts started running away with her. What a lovely home it could be made into! Painted white with green shutters like the country home where they had taken the family group picture. Wouldn't she just love to help fix it up! They would be near Friendly Village, and Lydia, too!

They could have a lovely yard and a garden, and Jeremiah could run all over the place. He would not need to be kept shut up in his box. He could have the barn for his home. Of course the garden and yard were now overgrown with weeds, but Hetty was seeing it as it could be arranged.

Then she realized she was building air castles, for no doubt the price would be entirely too high for their slim purse. She resolved to forget about it and she set her thoughts ahead to the new town. She wondered if she would have as good times as she had had in Friendly Village. No doubt there would be girls there just as nice as in the town they were leaving.

At this moment Father came around the house and up the lane to the waiting, dreaming Hetty.

"The sign underneath in small letters says to inquire at the house to the right. We'll stop at the next house!" he said.

"Oh, Father, what a lovely place it could be made into!" cried Hetty. "You don't suppose—do you think—I expect it would be—" Her words were a tumbled mass

of confusion, as if they could not keep up with her racing thoughts.

"Slow down, Hetty. What are you trying to say?" asked her father.

"It would be too good to be true!" she declared.

"What would be too good to be true?" asked Father, not quite realizing the yearning of his young daughter.

"That we could ever buy the little cottage!" she explained.

"Oh, would you like it that much?" he asked.

"More than that even. It would be wonderful!" she cried, hugging her arms in delight.

Then they set to planning what they could do to the cottage to make it attractive, but before they had half finished, they were in front of the house to the right, where they were to inquire about the FOR SALE cottage.

This house was near the road with only a small yard in front, but it was nicely kept with flowers blooming in neat beds near the fence. Hetty took the lines while her father went into the yard and rapped at the front door.

The door opened and Father disappeared inside. When he returned to the little house on wheels, he looked rather crestfallen and disappointed. Hetty tried to figure out what the expression meant.

When he had climbed up on the wagon seat and taken the lines, he spoke to the horse to move on. Then he said to Hetty, "It is to be sold at the sheriff's sale the first day of September."

"How much do they want for it?" asked Hetty anxiously.

"Mr. Corwin who lives here has the selling of it. He said that anyone who could put up eight hundred dollars in cash would be allowed to take over the place and assume the mortgage for the balance. That could be done any time between now and the day of the sale," he explained further, while the expression on Hetty's face changed from happy anticipation to one of great disappointment. She realized as much as Father how impossible it would be for them to raise that amount.

Several hundred dollars had gone into the building and equipping of the little house on wheels. On account of Father's health the doctor's bills had been large. In the city Father had had to keep a housekeeper while Hetty was small, in fact, it was only the last year that they had tried to do without one. He and Hetty had done the work together.

Hetty knew there was not much money, but they would save hard all summer and maybe by fall there would be enough. Still she was rather dubious about it. She wondered what Father thought about it.

"Do you suppose, if we saved our money all summer, that we could possibly have enough by fall, Father?" she asked.

"That would mean lots of customers, Hetty. We wouldn't dare count on it, but it doesn't cost anything to plan ahead."

And so they talked and planned how they would save

every cent to buy the little cottage. Father explained that there were several acres of land that went with the house. It would raise enough grain and hay for Old Doll, and the cow and the chickens that belonged to the place.

"Wouldn't that be great! To have our own milk and not to have to buy it in a bottle. We'd have our own eggs, too, wouldn't we, Father?" asked Hetty, showing more enthusiasm as they talked.

"Yes, of course, at least we hope the chickens would be the laying kind!" laughed Father.

Hetty was so happy as they planned a possible new home that she began to whistle. She always sang or whistled when she was very happy. Father liked to tease her so he said, "A whistling girl and a crowing hen will always come to some bad end!" But this did not check her overflow of spirits.

The day seemed short and the trip not nearly as tiresome as their trip to their first town had been, because they had something interesting to talk about.

It was nearly dusk when they drove into the town of Timberville. Hetty knew at once that it was larger than Fort Jefferson; it looked larger to her, or seemed to be spread out more. It had not only one main street, but several little short streets which crossed the main one. There was even a railroad!

"Father, do trains run through Timberville?" asked Hetty.

"Through, is right! They don't stop here. Only one train a day stops," laughed her father.

The streets seemed empty of children or even grown people; only a few stray dogs sat on doorsteps. Hetty imagined the people were all indoors eating their supper, for she could smell a delicious odor of food. She sniffed. "Fried potatoes! Father, do you smell what I do?"

"That makes me hungry! How about you?" he asked.

"Me, too! Our noon lunch seems such a long way off now," she answered.

As Father had made up his mind to move rather suddenly, he had not had time to write to the mayor. So he stopped at the City Hall to get his permit, and to find where would be the best place to park the little house.

The mayor persuaded Father to rent a lot right in the center of town, directly across the street from the Post Office, for he explained to Father, "In that way you will be your own advertisement."

Hetty was not so sure she would like that, but she said nothing until they were established in their new location.

Old Doll had to be taken quite a distance from the little house to a stable on the edge of town.

"That will be a nice walk for us when we go to feed her," said Father.

"Yes, but what about giving her grass along the road?" inquired Hetty.

"I hope to be so busy that I'll need you every minute!" he explained. "Perhaps we can rent a pasture for her during our stay here."

Hetty hustled around the kitchenette preparing their supper, for she was beginning to feel hollow clear through. While she set the table and peeled some potatoes—the smell of food while coming into town had been too much for her—Father busied himself about the studio.

In the city Father had done quite a bit of enlarging portraits. Crayons he called them. It was such hard work and so tedious that he had not advertised them at Fort Jefferson. Now he thought it would be a way to make some extra money. He made a large display of both prints and crayons and hung them in front of the little house. By this time Hetty had the meal ready and they sat down to enjoy it.

Hetty thought this was like living in town. They were as near the sidewalk as any of the business places. She knew that she could do all the window shopping she wanted here, for she had only to step out in front of the little house to see across the street or to the grocery to the left of them.

The only restaurant that the village afforded was to the right of the little house. Father explained that if they were too busy to cook, they need only stop next door to eat.

But Hetty made up her mind that they would do their own cooking, even if they were busy. She knew it would be cheaper and she planned many menus ahead that she thought would be economical and nourishing.

The next week was a busy one for the Burketts. The

people seemed to be either wealthier or more extravagant than those of Fort Jefferson. Hetty hadn't been able to figure out which. Anyway, it seemed that everyone wanted pictures taken. And there were many that wished crayon portraits, too.

Usually they wanted one made of an old print or tintype of some dear one long since dead. These pictures were sometimes faded and scarcely discernible, but Father was so much of an artist that he needed only a likeness. His fame spread until he was fairly swamped with work, but that lasted only a few weeks and the rush was over.

Hetty did not care at all when Father informed her that they would be moving in a few days. She had been so busy from the first that she had had little time to see the town or the children in it, except as they came to the studio to have their pictures taken.

The town itself was not at all like Friendly Village. It was much noisier, for the trains went through at all hours of the day and night, making a great roar. The railroad track was but a short distance from the little house on wheels. Often the noise awakened Hetty in the night.

She would wonder for a minute what the great noise was. Then it would come to her that they were not in Friendly Village. Sometimes it sounded as if the huge engine were coming right toward the little house. Hetty would cringe until the train was past, for she never felt quite safe about it. What if it should jump the track?

The people of Timberville were not as pleasant as those where she had spent so many happy hours. But she cared very little, for she was more concerned in making money in the new town, than in making friends.

On the last Saturday night before they left Timberville Father was busily engaged in counting up the profits made in the past few weeks, when he stopped suddenly and looked up. "Hetty, if we do as well for the rest of the summer as we have done here, we'll have our FOR SALE house before fall!" he announced.

"I'm afraid I can't wait!" cried Hetty, but when she noticed the tired lines on her father's face she wondered if he would be able to stand work like that all summer. "What is the name of the new town, and where is it?" she asked.

"It's Zanesfield, and it will be more than a day's journey. We will need to take two days to get there. It's rather historical; it was once a Wyandott Indian Village," informed her father.

"I'm sure that will be interesting. Will we see any real flesh and blood Indians there?" she asked.

"No, of course not, but every few years the townspeople give an Indian Festival in commemoration of their founder, Colonel Zane. Perhaps this is the year for it. I can't be certain," said Father.

"I do hope it is!" cried Hetty. "That would bring many people there, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, they come there from as far as two hundred miles to help celebrate the festival," replied Father.

The next morning the Traveling Gallery and its occupants left Timberville with only a few hurried farewells, and no heartaches at all. Hetty enjoyed the trip to the next town. They did not hurry, as they were going to take two days for the journey.

They stopped the first evening of their drive near a woods, and gypsy-like, made camp for the night. Hetty thought it would be fun to make a campfire and cook their supper out of doors, so Father showed her how to lay the sticks for the fire and while she cooked the meal, he gathered some brush to make wood for their breakfast fire. If they were going to be gypsies, Father said they might as well be good gypsies. They both declared that never had anything tasted as good as the bacon and eggs that Hetty fried over the campfire.

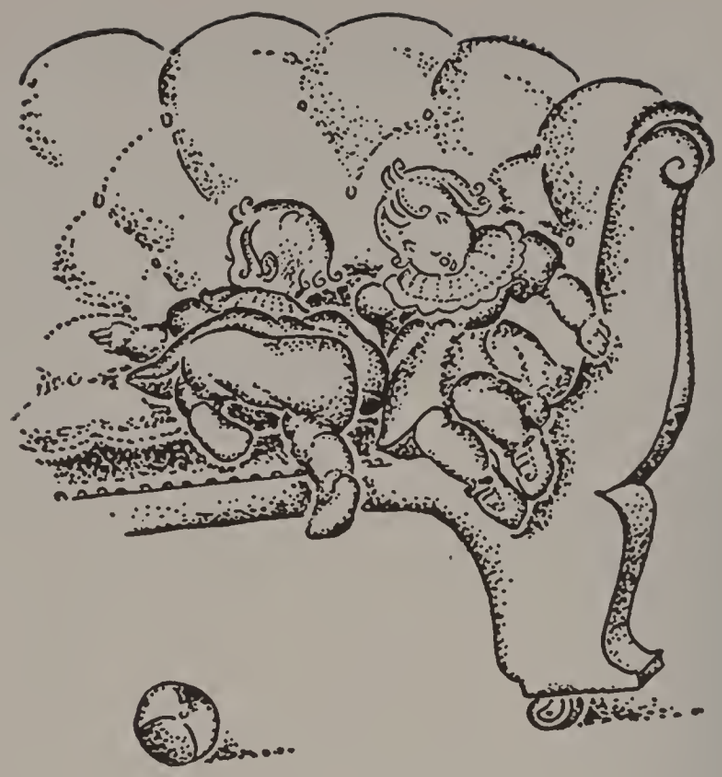
The next day found them rested for the final lap of the journey. Hetty wondered as they rode on toward the new town if she would like it any better than Timberville. The Indian tradition would be something to look forward to. She hoped this would be the year of their festival, or whatever it was that they celebrated.

Father had been rather quiet as they rode along. Hetty did not want to disturb him by asking any more questions about it, but she knew that she could find out all about it at the town. The drive seemed short, and early in the evening, while the sun was still a golden ball above the western horizon, they drove past the Indian monument, which was at the very gate of the city itself.

Father seemed to know the town, for he headed Old

Doll directly back of the Post Office on a short street where there was a vacant lot. While Hetty held the lines, he went into the Post Office. When he came back to the little house he said that they could stay on their present location.

Hetty busied herself getting supper, for she wished to take a walk over the town before dark, but there seemed so much to do that before she had finished everything it was beginning to grow dark. Well, she could wait until morning, she thought. She spent the rest of the evening before bedtime playing with Jeremiah, for she felt that she had neglected him dreadfully of late.



Chapter X

TWIN BABIES

Early the next morning, as soon as the housework was finished, Hetty started out to explore the new town. Her curiosity had been aroused by Father's remarks about the Indians, and she wanted to see for herself just what the town was like. As she walked through the streets she noticed that the June roses were open early. She imagined they were nodding and smiling to her as she passed.

The houses were much like the houses in other towns that she had visited, except that each one had roses somewhere about it. Either the porch was covered with a beautiful rose vine, or, lacking a porch, there would be an immense trellis in the yard covered with the lovely pink blossoms. The air seemed filled with a sweet fragrance.

The town itself was not very different from the town they had just left, although it was smaller. The houses were not as close together. There were much larger yards and gardens. Few children were on the streets, and Hetty thought that they were not out of bed yet, for there had been many children on the streets the evening before. Hetty smiled as she recalled how they had stared at the little house on wheels as Old Doll had leisurely pulled it down the main street of their village. No doubt they wondered what it could be.

Hetty walked in the direction from which they had come the night before. She wanted to see close up the huge Indian monument that was at the entrance of the little town. Before she realized it, the large boulder loomed up before her, sparkling in the early morning sunshine.

The rock looked as if it were covered with minute particles of frost, but Hetty knew it was only shiny bits of stone. On the very top of the immense rock was the form of a bronze Indian, standing ever so straight and tall.

The huge stone was set in a large square cement base or platform, surrounded by a queer fence made of iron posts connected by massive iron chains. Hetty had never before seen such big links as there were in this great chain.

Square copper plates on each side of the monument were inscribed to the memory of Isaac Zane and Simon Kenton. Hetty read them all with much interest, but

she was disappointed. These tablets did not tell all she wanted to know.

While she was sitting on the platform, wondering about it, a gray-haired man, quite bent with age and carrying a cane, approached from the direction of the town. He seemed to be going nowhere in particular, for he sauntered along in rather a leisurely way, looking to the right and to the left, apparently enjoying his early morning stroll. As he came near and spied Hetty huddled in front of the monument, he smiled a heart-warming smile as he said, "Good morning, little lady, you are up early this bright day. Are you lost?"

"No, I'm not lost!" she replied. "I was taking a walk and I wanted to see the monument better."

"You must be a stranger in these parts," he volunteered.

"Yes, I am," she admitted. "I came to your town only last night."

"Well, now, I'm right glad to meet you. Are you visiting someone here in the village?" he inquired.

Then Hetty explained about the Traveling Gallery and told him of the towns where she had been during the spring and early summer.

The old man seemed pleased to have found someone to talk to, for he settled himself on the platform beside Hetty, with his cane on his knees. Hetty was just tingling to ask a million questions about Colonel Zane and the Indians, but she hardly knew where to begin.

"May I ask what your name is?" inquired the old gen-

tleman before Hetty had time to form any questions of her own.

"My name's Hetty, Hetty Burkett!" she replied. "What's yours?"

"Hetty! Well, now, that's a real old-fashioned name, and I like it! It just suits me!" And he chuckled to himself. "My mother's name was Mehitable, but she was called Hetty for short. Is your *long* name Mehitable, too?" asked the stranger, ignoring Hetty's question for the moment.

"No, Hetty's all the name I have. What is your name, please?" asked Hetty, determined to have him answer her question.

"Bless my soul, yes, I clean forgot. My name's Marcus Aurelius Brown Short, but most folks call me Uncle Mark," he answered her.

Hetty thought that was a queer name; it was anything but short. Why did they give people such long names anyway? She smiled as she asked, "May I call you Uncle Mark, too?"

"Of course you may, child," he answered with a twinkle in his eye.

"And will you tell me the story about Colonel Zane and the Indians? It doesn't tell much on these inscriptions," ventured Hetty.

Uncle Mark felt highly complimented at this request. The lines around his eyes deepened as he cleared his throat and began, "Isaac Zane was born in Virginia back in 1753. When he was nine years old he was cap-

tured by the Wyandott Indians and brought to this country. This town was then a small Indian village. There were no white settlers in this part of the country then. The Chief of the tribe, Tarhe, and his wife, White Crane, brought up Isaac as their own son.

"When he grew to manhood he married their daughter, Princess Myeerah, with whom he had played since childhood. Princess Myeerah was more white than Indian, as her mother, a French Canadian, was stolen when quite small and adopted into the Indian tribe. Later she married the Chief. Isaac Zane was the only white settler in this valley for half a century."

When Uncle Mark paused in his narrative, Hetty asked, "Won't you tell me more about the princess?"

"Well, the princess had three suitors; two leaders of Indian tribes and Colonel Zane, her childhood sweetheart. She announced that she would marry the one who could take her from her horse, Lightning, going at top speed. The two Chiefs tried but failed. Isaac Zane, or the Colonel as he was called, won out and was married to the Princess Myeerah with all the ceremonies that went with the Wyandott Indian rites," continued Uncle Mark.

"And were there princesses born to them?" interposed Hetty.

"Yes, there were children, if that is what you mean, and they lived in this very town," answered Uncle Mark.

"Now can you tell me about this monument, and how they came to place it here?" asked Hetty.

"Yes, sirree, I can tell you about it! I guess I watched every move they made getting it here; it took them two weeks to move it three miles, and five days to place it upright on the foundation!" explained Uncle Mark.

"It must weigh an enormous lot!" interrupted Hetty.

"I reckon it does, somewhere near sixty tons!" boasted Uncle Mark.

"But where did they get it?" queried Hetty, not satisfied with his explanation.

"Didn't I tell you? They got it on a farm about three miles from town. It's what they call 'natural granite.' That's what makes it so shiny," continued Uncle Mark. "The townspeople put this monument up in memory of Colonel Zane, who had done so much for the early white settlers."

"What did he do, Uncle Mark?" asked Hetty.

"When the war broke out between the Indians and the whites, this Colonel Zane acted as a mediator and saved many of the whites from the wrath of the Indians and their dreaded tomahawk. The town was named for him, too. For a long time the citizens of Zanesfield, including the descendants of Isaac Zane, have given an Indian Festival every fifth year."

"Oh, do they have it this year?" cried Hetty.

"Yes, they do. How did you know?" asked Uncle Mark.

"I didn't know, but Father told me they have a celebration every few years. He didn't know whether this was the year or not," explained Hetty.

"Just a little over two weeks, now. It's always on the Fourth of July every fifth year. The fact is, they have been making preparations and rehearsing all summer. It is a big affair for these village folks. Most of them claim some relationship to the Colonel," announced Uncle Mark with a twinkle in his deep blue eyes. "I don't figure they all are, but it doesn't matter. Everyone in the village will take part in the big Festival, and many people from miles around will act in the plays. People come from the east and the west, the north and the south to take part in the big event."

"What do they do, Uncle Mark?" questioned Hetty, not wishing to have anything left out.

"They have an immense parade in the morning, but the most important thing of the whole Festival is the Indian Pageant, in which people act out dramatic scenes in the lives of the early settlers. They have over one hundred fine saddle horses that take part in it, too," he continued.

"With real horses! Where do they have it—I mean the Pageant?" asked Hetty.

"On Bristle Ridge Hill, just a half mile from town. It's a natural amphitheatre. The play goes on down in the valley, while the audience sits on the hillsides and watches it," explained Uncle Mark.

The old gentleman was so pleased to have such an appreciative listener that he talked on and on. Hetty sat entranced at his tales. She was living in the time of the Indians as she heard these thrilling yarns.

It suddenly came to her that she had been sitting on the hard cement a long time. She got to her feet, "I must be going. Father will think I'm lost and be worried," she announced.

"Well, now, I'm real sorry you have to go, but I'm mighty glad I met you," said Uncle Mark. "I'll come over to your picture wagon and see your pappy some time."

"Yes, please do," urged Hetty. "Father will be glad to know you. Thanks for the stories."

The old gentleman got up rather stiffly with the use of his cane and continued on down the street. Hetty turned to wave at him and then she hurried as fast as she could back to the little house. She saw, at first glance, that Father was taking a picture, and when she took a second look she could hardly believe her eyes.

There were two babies on the plush settee! They were so much alike that Hetty thought she was seeing double. She rubbed her eyes, and still there were two babies. She had heard of twin babies, but she had never seen any before. Lydia had told her about an aunt of hers that had twin babies that looked so much alike. She stood very quietly by the front door and watched them. How cunning they were!

Father was trying to take their picture, but he was having a sorry time of it. They were squirming and twisting and would not be quiet even for a second. Poor Father was losing patience when he looked up and saw Hetty. His face took on a relieved expression as he said,

"Oh, here you are! You are just in time. I need you to help keep the babies quiet. Here, stand by the camera and see what you can do. They won't keep quiet for me!"

Hetty smilingly took her place in front of the babies. She was glad she was back in time to help Father.

The babies' mother was behind the curtain trying to watch them so they wouldn't topple off the settee.

Hetty smiled and clapped her hands at the babies, but they insisted on trying to get down. Their mother explained to Hetty that they were just beginning to walk and wanted always to be on the floor.

When Hetty's efforts failed to interest them, she ran to the little box in the kitchenette and came back with Jeremiah in her arms. The twins straightened up as if by magic, and looked at the cat with admiring eyes. They were so still that Father took advantage of it and snapped their picture; and quickly turning the plate holder over, he snapped another.

After the picture was taken, Hetty let the twins pat Jeremiah as a reward for keeping still.

The babies' mother was extremely grateful to Hetty for her part in helping with the picture. She had feared that they would not keep quiet at all. She told Hetty all about the twins, and the twins seemed to have fallen in love with Hetty. They both wanted to come to her at once. She decided she should have two laps instead of one, for just one baby the size of the twins filled her small lap to overflowing.

She learned that their names were Jean and Joan, which she thought just suited them. She wished she might have them always to play with. They would be much more fun than Jeremiah, but more work, too, she thought.

Hetty realized that she would not dare to run off and stay as long again. She hadn't thought there would be a customer so soon. The babies' mother explained that she had a sister in Fort Jefferson who had told her about the Traveling Gallery, and she had made up her mind to have the babies' picture taken when she saw the little house drive into town the evening before. She knew by her sister's description that it was the one that had been at Fort Jefferson in the spring.

Hetty played with the twins and listened to their mother, when all at once she remembered that Lydia had told her about an aunt that had twin babies. The mother spoke of a sister at Fort Jefferson. Could it be—but, of course, it couldn't! Nevertheless, she spoke up quickly, "What is your sister's name?"

"Langdon! Mrs. John Langdon. They live a little way from Fort Jefferson in the country," she replied.

"Then you're Lydia's aunt!" cried Hetty excitedly.

"Yes, I am. And you're Hetty, aren't you? My sister wrote me about you, too!" she explained.

"Oh, I can't believe it's true! These are the twins that Lydia told me about. I never thought I should see them!" exclaimed Hetty.

She was so excited over finding someone who knew

Lydia, that she could not talk enough. Father said she sounded like an express train. She was as happy as she could be for she had heard from her friend. Lydia had not been very prompt to answer Hetty's letters, and she feared her chum might be ill, but the babies' mother said that Lydia was well.

"She never was much of a letter writer," she explained.

Hetty could hardly bear to part with the twins, but the mother promised to bring them again to the little house.

"Better yet, you come to see them!" she told Hetty and explained how to find where they lived.

When Hetty was alone with her father again she told him about her friend of the monument.

"And to think, Father," she triumphed, "they do have the Indian Festival this year. The Fourth of July. Isn't that fine?"

"That ought to make us some extra work," rejoiced Father.

That night Hetty sat down and wrote to Lydia and told her all about the twins and how glad she was to find them. Then she explained about the wonderful Indian Festival that the town was going to have in a few weeks. She hardly knew which she was the more excited about.

Chapter XI

AN INDIAN PAGEANT

Hetty stopped at the Post Office the next morning to mail her letter to Lydia. The Post Master greeted her with a smile, "Good morning, Miss, and how are you this fine day?"

"I'm fine," returned Hetty as she deposited her letter in its proper place.

"You're the Picture Man's daughter, aren't you?" he questioned.

"Yes, I am," admitted Hetty as she turned to leave the room.

"Hold on here a minute, I've something important to discuss with you," he informed her.

Hetty wondered what he could want with her. He had known her only a few minutes. She supposed he wanted to jest with her, and she stopped and looked at him inquiringly.

"You see it's this way," he continued. "We need a little girl about your size to take the part of *Betty Zane* in the Pageant we're planning to give in about two weeks. The girl that was rehearsing for the part, sprained her ankle at the last practice, and there just aren't any more girls that size in Zanesfield. The rest of them are already in it. Would you consent to take the part?"

"I'm afraid I wouldn't know what to do," protested Hetty.

"It will be easy. They'll tell you what to do, and you don't say a word. It's all action. You can do it all right, too, I'm quite sure of it. Now will you? I'm the one who has charge of getting the players. I was certainly glad when I saw you come in here. I knew you'd be just right for the part. How about it?" he insisted.

"I will, if Father lets me," Hetty finally consented. "I'd love to."

Father was willing, and so it was that Hetty was given the part of Betty in the big Pageant. She was as thrilled over it as any of the villagers could possibly be.

The next two weeks were indeed busy ones for the occupants of the little house. There were many pictures

taken and Hetty's time was filled with helping Father with them and with rehearsing for her part in the Pageant. Even Jeremiah felt sadly neglected, for there didn't seem to be any time left for him. She hadn't had time to call on the twins, either, but she promised herself that when the Pageant was over, she would have loads of time then.

Before Hetty realized it the big day had arrived! The Fourth of July! Everything was excitement in the town. It seemed to grow larger over night. Huge banners hung across the streets, each one with the name of some character in the Pageant. One of the streamers had Betty printed in large letters. Hetty was so excited she could hardly eat her breakfast. Everywhere she looked she saw Indians. She knew they were only white people dressed as Indians, but she liked to pretend that they were really truly ones. It gave her such queer little shivers.

Just as she finished with the breakfast dishes two people came to the studio to have their pictures taken in their Indian costumes. They explained that they were in the play, and Hetty thought she remembered their voices at rehearsal, but she could not be sure. The evening before they had had a short dress rehearsal before sundown and Hetty thought the Indians all looked alike.

From the moment the first customers came to the studio until the Big Pageant in the afternoon, Father was busy taking pictures. Even Hetty helped; this time acting as a sort of hostess, helping to find places for every-

one to sit until Father was ready and their turn came to pose. She knew it would take many days to finish all the pictures that Father had taken during the day. She smiled to herself, for more work meant more money for the little cottage, and she was very happy!

The pictures were all taken by one o'clock in the afternoon. Then Hetty hurriedly prepared a lunch, for both Hetty and her father had been too busy to stop at the noon hour.

After lunch they followed the crowds to Bristle Ridge Hill, about a half mile from town. Hetty knew the way for she had been there a number of times for practicing. She hoped she would do her part well, and not stumble and fall as the girl whose part she had taken had done. She explained to Father that she was the one who saved Fort Henry from the attack of the Indians, by carrying ammunition to the Fort under fire.

"I'm not really fired on," explained Hetty, "but it sounds real, and it does frighten me a bit. I have to run very fast from one fort to another. The Indians try to get me, but I reach the fort just in time. It's exciting. I'm only in the last part of the Play. I can sit with you and watch the first acts. The director said there would be an intermission between the two parts. Then I can run to the fort.

"The first part of the play shows Ebenezer Zane as he grew up and married the Princess. He won her, too, by grabbing her from her horse while it's going as fast as lightning. That's its name, too! The last part of the

play really shows the last battle of the French and Indian War. I am Isaac Zane's sister Betty, who lives at Fort Henry. When a hostile tribe of Indians attacks the fort, we run out of powder. I run to a neighboring fort and borrow some, getting back in time to escape being captured by the Indians."

Hetty talked on as they walked to the scene of the Pageant. They found that the steep hillsides were already swarming with people. Never had Hetty seen so many in one place before.

The stage was all set in the valley below them. At one end were the forts of the early settlers, at the other end were the Indian wigwams in neat rows to represent the Indian village. In the distance Hetty could see many horses with their riders prancing up and down in the valley. She explained to Father that they were really in the play. She supposed they were practicing now.

It seemed a long time to Hetty before she heard the bugle call rounding up the players and announcing that everything was in readiness to begin.

A large horn set up on a platform was used by the chairman of the program to explain the drama to the audience and to announce the acts of the Play.

Hetty could hardly wait for the Play to begin. She was as excited about it as if she had not been a part of the Play for the past two weeks. It seemed so real today, somehow.

The first act was announced, and before Hetty realized it, the Play was on. Episodes followed each other in such

rapid and thrilling succession as to almost take her breath away. Never had it seemed so exciting and it was hard to imagine it was only make-believe. She was sitting near Father and she gripped his arm as each act became more enthralling, until he declared that there would be nothing left of him by the end of the Play.

The first part of the Pageant was over, and Hetty hurried down the hillside to take her place in the fort. She realized that she was a bit shaky, for she was excited over watching the thrilling scenes of the first part of the Play. She felt a lump in her throat. She tried to swallow it, but it stayed there. Then she thought how glad she was that she didn't have to do any talking, for she felt it would have been impossible at that moment.

She heard the firing of guns. She seemed in a daze, when someone said, "There, Betty, that's your cue. Run, child, run as you never ran in your life before!"

She found herself outside the fort. Now she knew what she was to do; run to the other fort and back. Feeling seemed to come back to her legs. She felt that the very life of the settlers in the fort depended on her getting to the neighboring fort and back in the shortest possible time.

She dashed across to the opposite fort. There they put the powder horns in her shaking hands. She turned and started back. Never had her slim legs traveled over the ground so fast. She could hear the wild yells of the Indians and hear their firing. What if she should not get there in time?

That seemed to give new life to her and with an extra spurt she reached her goal. The door of the fort was thrown open and she was pulled inside, "Bravo! My child, that was fine! You'd make a good race horse!" cried a voice inside.

It was all over, that is, her part in the Play was over, and she breathed easier. She could hear the Indian yells growing fainter and the shots less frequent. Finally they announced that the Pageant was over. She hurried out of the fort and up the hill where she had left her father.

Hetty had told him to wait for her. She feared she would not be able to find him in the crowds that were leaving the hillsides. It was difficult for her to work her way between the moving people, but at last she reached an open space and looked around her. Father was waving to her farther up.

"How did you like it?" she cried as she came near him.

"It was splendid! And my little girl was a real heroine!" he said holding her close.

People were leaving in all directions. There were even several automobiles that passed them along the road. They were the first Hetty had seen since she and her father had started on their gypsy tour in the spring.

After the Festival, Zanesfield appeared to shrink. It seemed even smaller than ever, but Hetty and her father were industriously finishing pictures and had no time to think about the lonesome town. Many of the pictures had been paid for and were to be mailed to the customers.

On Saturday, at the end of a week of hard work, the last pictures were mailed and business was finished at Zanesfield. Father was pleased with his work in the town, thanks to the Festival, but Hetty knew that he was working entirely too steadily, although the harder he worked the nearer they were to purchasing the new cottage.

That night Father said they would rest all day Sunday, for they needed it and had earned it, but Monday morning they would leave Zanesfield for Merlin, a little canal town not very far distant.

After dinner on Sunday, Hetty spent a while telling some of her especial friends good-bye; later she took Jeremiah under her arm and set out for a farewell visit with the twins. They had just awakened from their afternoon nap, and were in the best of humor.

Hetty found that after romping with them awhile, she could actually tell them apart. Jean's face was not quite as plump as Joan's, and she was more active, too. She could take a few steps by herself, while Joan toppled over when Hetty let go of her hand.

They liked Jeremiah, but were rather rough with him. He thought he was being mistreated, for never had he had his tail pulled in all his life before. That afternoon it was a common occurrence, although the twins did not mean to be rough. Hetty showed them how to pat the kitty. They would pat gently for a while, then bing! A little hand would come down with a crack, and Jeremiah would lay back his ears and meow.

Hetty had worn her little red plaid gingham dress. Joan liked red; she patted the dress and said, "Prit-tee!"

Hetty spent the happiest afternoon since she had left Fort Jefferson. It made her think of Lydia and the good times they had had together. She discovered Lydia's picture on the stand in the parlor.

"Where did you get it?" she asked Mrs. Joslin, the babies' mother.

"Lydia's mother sent it to me. It was taken while your father was in Fort Jefferson, wasn't it?" she asked Hetty.

"Of course it was. What a time we had taking it. We were both in a silly mood that day, and Lydia could hardly keep her face straight long enough to have a picture taken. I had to leave the studio until Father had finished, or I would have made her laugh in the picture. I have one, too! I had Father make an extra one for me. I'm going to have him make a special one of the twins for me, too. Did you like their picture?" asked Hetty.

"Yes, I like it. I think they are fine. I have given them all away but this one!"

Almost before Hetty knew it the afternoon was over. She kissed Jean and Joan good-bye, and hurried back to the little house on wheels. She found her father deeply absorbed in a big book. He looked up and smiled at her as she entered.

"Did you have a nice afternoon?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, Father, the twins are the dearest things I ever saw!" she cried happily. "I wish I could be near them always!"

Chapter XII

OFF WITH THE OLD AND ON WITH THE NEW

Monday morning there was a mild bustle of departure, as Hetty and her father made things ready for leaving Zanesfield. She felt that they were changing their town, as some people change their gowns; not as often perhaps, but she knew that she had been in more towns during the summer than she had gowns, anyway.

She had made many friends among the townspeople, and she had a feeling of regret at leaving the town, although she would not have liked living here always. Already she was looking forward to the new town and its occupants.

As they drove past the Indian monument on their way out of town, Hetty waved a farewell to the bronze statue standing so straight and tall. She felt that somehow he understood her feelings. She had learned much of his tradition since that first morning in Zanesfield when she had sat at his feet listening to the tales of Uncle Mark. Since that time she had become a part of those very same stories, and they would always be a part of her, just as they were a part of every resident of the little town. They were not legends any more, but a part of life itself. She wondered if when she had grown as old as Uncle Mark, she could recall these adventures and tell them as vividly as the old gentleman had.

The hot July sun beat down on the little house, until, as it neared the noon hour, it became almost unbearable. It was the hottest day they had had all month. Finally Father drove under a big oak tree on the roadside and unhitched Old Doll. He turned her loose to eat grass along the roadside.

"Won't she run off if she isn't tied?" worried Hetty.

"Not a chance, it's much too hot! She'd rather eat the cool sweet grass in the shade; there are so many trees along the road. We'll keep an eye on her anyway," said Father.

Hetty prepared a cold lunch, for Father insisted it was much too hot to cook anything. After they had eaten their lunch Father spread a thick comforter on the grass in the shade, and the two of them straightened out on its soft folds. Father signified his intention of resting

during the heat of the day. It would be pleasanter to finish the trip after sundown.

A refreshing breeze sprang up during the early afternoon, which cooled the air so much that Hetty and her father fell sound asleep. When they awoke they felt much refreshed, and decided that they could continue their journey in comfort.

Old Doll had been having such a grand time nipping the lush green grass along the roadside that Father had to fairly pull her away to hitch her up to the little house on wheels. They stopped at the next little red schoolhouse to give the horse a drink of water, and to get a cooling drink for themselves.

The rest of the journey was uneventful and just as the moon was rising over the edge of the distant woods, they drove down the streets of Merlin.

Hetty had never seen such a queer town before. It reminded her of what she had read of Venice, Italy, for right through the center of the town was a canal, on each side of which was a street. These two streets seemed to be about all there was of Merlin.

Father stopped the little house in front of a cottage with the sign MAYOR in the front room window, and went into the house. Hetty decided they did not have a city building in this town. She wondered if they would stay close to the canal, for she thought she would be able to have plenty of fun playing there.

When Father returned to the Traveling Gallery, Mr. Meyers, the mayor, followed him out.

"I had almost given you up. Why are you so late?" he asked Father.

"Well, you see, the Big Indian Festival that they had at Zanesfield made us so much extra work, that we could not get it finished and get here when I wrote you to expect us," he explained.

"The people have begun to think you were a fake, for I hung up the advertising that you sent me, and most of them could hardly wait to have their pictures taken. I think everyone in Merlin is counting on having his picture taken!" the mayor declared.

"That's just what we want!" said Father.

"Seems to me your health is none too good. You look thin!" added the mayor.

"We've worked very hard the last few weeks at Zanesfield, my helper and I. This is my daughter Hetty, and a big help she is, too!" said Father, smiling up at Hetty who was sitting on the high seat of the Picture Wagon as still as a mouse.

Father climbed up to his seat beside Hetty and the mayor returned to the house. Hetty handed Father the lines and he drove the little house on down the street to a lot near the blacksmith shop. It had a lovely vacant lot next to it covered with sweet-smelling clover where Mr. Meyers told Father he could tether his horse.

The next morning Hetty was up bright and early to tidy up the little house and get everything in readiness for a business rush. After listening to Mr. Meyers, she felt pleased and wondered how much they would make

in the town. Each town meant that much nearer their future plans.

The first week in Merlin was one of the busiest they had had all summer, for it seemed that everybody in the country wanted pictures taken that first week. After that, business lagged and Hetty found much time to spend playing along the canal.

One day when she was wading along the edge of the canal to cool her tired feet, Johnny Meyers came down. He was the only son of the mayor and was about the age of Hetty. She had met him when he came with his mother and father to have a family group picture taken. She greeted him with, "Oh, hello, Johnny! What are you going to do?"

His arms were full of thick boards which he dropped on the grassy bank.

"I'm making a raft. You know—to float on the water," he replied.

"Like Tom Sawyer?" asked Hetty.

"I don't know him," answered Johnny.

Hetty laughed at his seriousness. "Will you ride on it?" she asked him.

"I will if it works!" he smiled back at her. "Would you ride on it, too, or would you be afraid?"

"No, I wouldn't be afraid if you rode on it," she answered. "May I?"

"Of course. I had most of it made before I brought it down here. Soon as I put the bolts in, it will be finished," he announced.

Hetty sat on the bank and watched him. He seemed so strong and sure of himself, but she thought that was because he was a boy. She could do most things that boys could do, but she knew her arms were not as strong.

Johnny could lift those heavy boards. He swung the hammer as he nailed an extra strip across to hold the boards together. He had some wire too. He seemed to be using it to hold the boards tight. She supposed that was in case the nails slipped or something.

Finally he threw down his hammer and cried, "There she is! Now let's see if she works!"

Hetty laughed to herself, for she couldn't for the life of her see why he called an old lifeless board "she," but she said nothing, for she didn't want to lessen her chance to ride on the only raft she had ever seen.

Johnny picked up, or rather shoved the raft with both hands, holding on to a piece of wire attached to one end. It splashed as it struck the water, then it righted itself.

"It floats all right!" he cried. "Come on, get on!"

Hetty had taken off her shoes and stockings in order to wade in the water. Now she said she had better take them back to the little house, before she went on the "cruise." Secretly she wished to ask Father if he thought it would be quite safe for her to ride with Johnny on his home-made raft.

Father was not particularly keen about her riding on the raft, but he said, "The water isn't very deep, and Johnny is old enough to know whether it is safe or not. I expect if you sit still, you will be all right."

Hetty did not need that final admonition, for she knew that she would sit still. She had read enough about what happens when one jiggles a boat, and she supposed a raft would be the same.

When she got back to the canal, Johnny was already on the raft with a long pole in his hands which, he explained, was to guide it by.

Hetty very gingerly stepped on the raft and sat down in the middle of it. Johnny pushed it away from the bank with the pole, and the current seemed to carry it along. It was the first time that Hetty had ever been on the water.

She was enjoying every minute. They drifted down stream and everything went fine until Johnny decided that it had gone far enough; he tried to turn it around and head it upstream. That wasn't so easy! Johnny tugged and worked, but he gained not an inch. His face got the color of scarlet, and he puffed like a steam engine, but it did no good.

Hetty, who had been enjoying the ride, thought it wasn't going to be so much fun if they couldn't get back.

Johnny was plainly embarrassed, for he had asked Hetty to ride with him. What was he to do?

Hetty thought of a plan. "Steer the raft over to the bank and we can walk back along the towpath," she suggested.

"I guess I'll have to do it. I hate to let you walk back, but I guess that's the only way. I just can't make any headway up stream," confessed Johnny.

Hetty sat down in the middle of it

"I think the wind is too strong for you, too," consoled Hetty.

Hetty did not say so, but she was thinking of walking that long trip back to town in her bare feet. She had not learned to do without shoes and her feet were very tender. Johnny did not think of that. His own feet had been bare all summer and were as brown as the ground on which he walked.

After the children had stepped off the raft, Johnny pulled it by holding to the wire and walking along the path near the canal. Hetty picked her way along the path behind him. She did not want him to see how hard it was for her to walk on the rough path without shoes.

As she came in sight of the little house she saw her father who had started on the hunt of her. He could see the canal for quite a distance from a window in the little house. When he missed the children, he was worried and went in search of them. He laughed when Hetty told him they had to walk all the way back along the towpath.

Father explained that many years ago they used that very canal for large boats which were pulled by mules walking along the bank, making a path. "That's where it gets its name, tow-path. The mules towed the boat. Tow is another word for pull. It means especially 'draw through the water with a rope,' " he said.

"Then Johnny towed the raft back, didn't he, Father?" laughed Hetty.

"On a small scale, yes," smiled Father.

And then he announced that they would leave Merlin the next day.

"It isn't that we haven't had much business; it's only that the town is very small and there are few people in it," he explained.

Although Hetty had enjoyed her short stay in the town, it was not like Friendly Village. None of the towns was like it, and she knew that none of them would ever take its place.

Hetty could not figure out why there were so few babies in the town. Father told her that most of the people in the village were retired farmers and of course were not young. Most of them had children who were grown up and had babies of their own, and lived in other places.

Almost before Hetty had time to realize it, they were leaving the queer little Venetian village far behind them.

There had been a cooling rain the night before and Father thought the day would be fine for travel.

That evening, after a rather commonplace trip, they drove into Cedar Springs, a town set deep down in the valley.

Chapter XIII

A FIRE IN THE LITTLE HOUSE

For a whole week after coming to Cedar Springs, Hetty was as busy as a whole swarm of bees. She found no time to make friends with the children of the village, except, of course, as they came to the studio to have their pictures taken.

The community seemed fairly alive with babies, and Hetty was glad. Father had taken so many pictures of them that Hetty had become very proficient in the art of holding their attention. She seemed always to know just what kind of faces to make, and what capers to cut to draw their interest.

Father said she was a clown and a jumping jack combined. When her own antics failed to attract a timid or frightened baby, she would enlist the aid of Jeremiah,

and the two of them never failed to keep the baby quiet. Seldom did Father have to retake a baby's picture.

Hetty insisted that Jeremiah deserved part of the credit, for she felt that he had more than made up to Father for the prints he had spoiled. But something occurred the very next week that made Father feel that Jeremiah had earned a perfect right to call the Traveling Gallery his home.

One morning after Hetty had swept and dusted the little house, she put a pot of beans on the stove to boil for the noonday meal. She could go on about her work of helping her father with the pictures and dinner would mostly prepare itself. The two were busy back in the dark room developing pictures when they heard a cry, "Meow! Meow!"

"What can be the matter with Jeremiah!" cried Hetty, for she knew that he seldom made any noise unless he was hungry. She knew that he couldn't be hungry, for he had left part of his breakfast.

"Me-ow! Me-ow!" came the insistent call, almost one of terror now.

"I'm going to see what can be the matter with that cat!" declared Hetty, as she dried her hands and proceeded to fix things so that she could open the door long enough to slip through.

"Go on," urged Father, "I'll watch your plates while you are out."

When she opened the outer door of the darkroom, she was startled to find the little house filled with smoke.

"Father!" she cried, "the house is on fire!" and she rushed to the kitchen with Father close at her heels. Flames were climbing up the wall back of the oil stove. Jeremiah, in his box in the corner was struggling frantically to get out between the slats on top of the box.

Hetty grabbed up a kettle of water that she had used to wash the beans; she dashed it against the flames. Father threw the contents of their water bucket on the fire. By that time the flames were out, but it was still smoldering, ready to burst out any minute. He rushed to the town pump, which was across the street from the little house, and returned with a bucket of water which finished putting out the fire.

"I wonder how it could have started," said Father, after the excitement was over, and Jeremiah had been taken out of his box where he lay trembling in Hetty's arms.

And when they investigated they found a half-burned dish cloth on the floor behind the stove. The cloth had been left too near the stove and when it had burned the flames caught the wall paper back of the stove.

"It's all my fault! I must have left the dish towel too near the burner. But if it hadn't been for Jeremiah it might have been a lot worse!" reasoned Hetty as she hugged him close.

"Righto!" hailed Father. "That's once he did us an extra good turn, and he shall have his reward. How would you like to run over to the butcher's and get him some liver for his dinner?"

"He'll love it!" cried Hetty. "Won't you, kitty kat?"

After this incident Jeremiah was allowed his freedom, although Hetty watched him rather carefully when he was in the house; she didn't want him to lose his well-earned reputation again.

There was really very little damage done by the fire. The wall paper was burned for a space behind the stove, but after the little house had been thoroughly aired and the wall repapered, there was scarcely any trace left of the fire that might have spelled disaster.

Every Saturday evening found Hetty and her father poring over the account book, figuring how much they had taken in during the week. They would add it to their fast growing nest egg, to find how much they still lacked before they could buy the little cottage, and each Saturday found them that much nearer their goal.

Their sum had mounted until the Saturday following the fire, Father announced that if they did as well in the next two weeks, they would have enough money to take over the little cottage. And he sat down immediately and wrote to Mr. Corwin, who had charge of the sale of it, to hold it for him.

Hetty was happier than she had been in weeks. She danced around the little house singing, "The Campbells are coming! Tra-la-la-la!" Then she would change the words of the song and sing, "The Burketts are coming! Tra-la-la-la!"

Father smiled at her antics, but he too felt much as

Hetty did, and both of them were beginning to like Cedar Springs more and more. This was because they were kept busy with pictures, but also because they were looking forward to the time when they would have a real home of their very own.

Cedar Springs was the largest town they had been in all summer. It was the county seat. People from all over the county came to pay their taxes in the big building in the center of town.

They came there for many other reasons, too. This brought many more customers to the Traveling Gallery. They in turn told their friends, who told others, until Father declared they would have to stay all summer to take care of all the people who wanted pictures taken.

Hetty was working hard these days, but it was not like work to her now. Everything she did was a game, and when the game was ended, she would be in their own little cottage, near the town she loved best of all.

Chapter XIV

HAILSTONES

Father received a letter from Mr. Corwin, saying that he had written just in time. It seems that shortly after receiving Mr. Burkett's letter, he had had a chance to sell the cottage to a New York man, who was a writer. The man wanted it to use as atmosphere for his stories.

"I'm glad you sent your letter when you did, Father. Just think how badly we would feel, if, after we have the money, we couldn't buy the cottage that we both want! I'm sure we could never find another one that would suit us as well," declared Hetty.

The next week was a busy one. Father said that two more weeks would finish their work in Cedar Springs. Then they would start back to Friendly Village.

Hetty was so excited about going back to the town she loved, that she fairly walked on air. Her feet seemed

hardly to touch the ground. It was the first thing she thought of when she got up in the morning, and the last thing before going to bed at night.

Sometimes she was so occupied with her thoughts that Father had to speak to her the second time to be heard. It even affected her cooking. She used sugar for salt, and salt for sugar, and never seemed to remember whether she had seasoned the food or not.

Hetty had written several times to Lydia during the summer, but she had not mentioned the FOR SALE cottage. She wanted it to be a complete surprise to her.

Lydia had answered Hetty's last letter with a rather sorry tone about being lonesome.

"I'm glad it won't be long until school starts," she wrote, "for I'm getting tired staying home. Where will you go to school?"

Hetty chuckled to herself when she read that part of the letter.

"How surprised Lydia will be when she finds out that we'll go to school together!" thought Hetty as she read the letter for the fifth time.

The days of that last week in Cedar Springs seemed long to Hetty. Each day grew longer than the one before, until Hetty declared the days were made of rubber and seemed always to stretch themselves out.

Friday was one of those hot days of middle August, when there was not a breath of air stirring.

"It will surely storm today!" predicted Father as he went about the business of mixing the developer.

"I hope it doesn't!" replied Hetty. "I want the sun to shine so we can finish up those last prints."

"Yes, I hope so too, Hetty, for that extra spurt last week, when the people found out we were thinking of leaving soon, has indeed worked us overtime," declared Father. "Unless we can finish all of the pictures in the next two weeks, we must wait until later to leave."

"Couldn't you send them back to them by mail?" asked Hetty.

"Yes, of course, I could, but I don't want pictures to worry about when we get in our new home. I want to spend my time fixing up the place."

"That will be heaps of fun! I can help you paint, can't I, Father?" insisted Hetty. "At least I can help with the inside woodwork. I like to paint."

"Certainly you may help, but I'll need you most to help with the planning," explained her father.

Just then Hetty noticed some black clouds in the sky.

"I'm afraid it is going to storm after all!" she announced.

"Say, it does look bad!" agreed Father, looking out of the window. "We'd better put the windows down; then we won't need to worry about them."

And they had just closed the windows, when there was a terrific roll of thunder. The rain started to fall, gently at first, then harder, gradually turning into hailstones. These were small at first, getting larger as the storm progressed, until immense hailstones as large as hen's eggs were beating upon the little house.

The skylight in the studio of the Traveling Gallery had resisted the small hailstones, but when the larger ones beat against the panes, they were shattered to bits. Crash! Bang! Crash! Bang! And the small windows went on breaking. The noise was deafening. Hetty was terrified.

She thought the little house was surely falling to pieces! She and her father were standing by the front door in the tiny reception room, watching the hailstones as they bounced on the grass, filling up the hollows until the yard looked as if there had been a snowstorm. When the skylight crashed, they saw the glass fly in all directions. The studio door was open and some of the pieces of glass fell near their feet.

"I'm glad we weren't in the studio! We might have been hurt!" said Father as he pulled Hetty into the farthest corner.

The hailstorm lasted only a few minutes, but it seemed like hours to the terror-stricken Hetty, holding on to her father's arm.

When the storm had ceased, they surveyed their loss. Every single pane in the large skylight was missing, shattered to bits by the hail! Hetty could not keep the tears back when she saw the destruction in the little studio that she had so carefully dusted that morning, or was it that morning? It seemed as if it were a long time ago.

"Get the broom, Hetty, and we'll try to gather up the glass," said Father, looking for all the world as if he had been hit by the hailstones himself.

In a daze Hetty helped sweep up the scraps of glass, picking up the larger pieces and putting them in a pile near the front door.

Father brought in the mopstick, for much rain had come through the broken windows, together with the large hailstones which had melted on the floor where they lay making tiny puddles of water.

Nothing was really badly damaged in the studio except the back-drop curtains, and Father said he could easily repaint them. Fortunately Father's camera, the pride of his life, was out of range of the skylight; it had been covered with its usual hood, a rubberized black cloth which hid it completely.

When the room was cleared of glass, Father said, "I'll have to get those lights replaced as soon as possible, for it may rain again soon!"

While he went across the street to the hardware store to see about having the glass put in the skylight, Hetty tried her best to keep cheerful. Father was feeling so badly about his loss that it wouldn't do for her to make things worse by crying. She knew that seventy-five panes of glass would cost a lot, even if they were small. It would take quite a sum from their nest egg, as they called their savings.

Father had said that in two weeks they would be ready to take over the little cottage. Now it would take as much as they had made for some time to replace the broken glass.

While Hetty was thinking about it, Father returned

with a man from the store. He had come over to measure for the glass.

"That's the biggest order of glass we've had for a long time!" declared the hardware clerk. "I'll just take the frame over to the store and fit the glass in it."

At the supper table that night Father explained that they would have to give up buying the little cottage, because it had cost so much for a skylight.

"But Father," protested Hetty, "couldn't we just wait a couple of weeks longer? Maybe we could make that much more."

"We were waiting two weeks as it was; enough more to pay for the glass would run it into September, and you know the cottage is to be sold at auction the first day of September, unless it is taken before that time," answered Father. "I must write to Mr. Corwin and tell him not to hold it for us, as we can't make it by the first. No doubt he will sell it to that writer fellow from New York."

"Let's not write to him just yet," suggested Hetty, trying to put off the fateful day.

"Why not? We will find one later when we have more money," said Father.

"Yes, but we'll never find one that we like as well, or as near Fort Jefferson!" said Hetty. "Let's not write this week, anyhow."

"Well, all right, if it will make you feel any better, we'll wait and write the first of next week," agreed Father.

Chapter XV

HETTY OVERHEARS A CONVERSATION

The next morning Hetty slept late; her father had heard her groaning in the night and knew that she had not slept well, so he did not call her at the usual time. He was quite busy with pictures, but he could wait for her help. They would not need to hurry now. There would be all the time in the world, he thought sadly, for he was more disappointed than he had admitted to Hetty.

He saw how deeply she had felt the loss, and he tried to make her sorrow less by telling her they would find a cottage just as nice, or perhaps a house they would like even better.

When Hetty did awake, she dressed quickly, for she

knew by the sun that it was late. Why hadn't her father called her? Then she remembered the events of the day before, and it was as if a cloud had drifted across the bright sun. She tried to appear in her usual good humor as she came into the room where Father was busily working with his prints.

"Father, why didn't you call me?" she reproved him.

"Early to bed and early to rise only applies to the old and the wise!" laughed Father.

"It's 'most time for dinner now, isn't it, Father?" she asked.

"Yes, now since you mentioned it, I do feel a little empty! Get dinner now, and you can eat breakfast while I eat dinner," joked her father.

"I'll do that. Only I'll eat breakfast and dinner together," she insisted, as she started for the kitchen.

She found that it would be necessary to get some groceries before she could finish with the meal, so she decided to go at once. She took her little market basket and her housekeeping pocketbook and she started for the grocery, which was about three blocks down the street on the opposite side.

"I'll not be gone long," she called back to her father.

The grocery store was filled with men discussing the storm of the day before and the havoc it had caused.

Hetty listened to their conversation indifferently, while she waited her turn to be served. Suddenly she heard her father's name mentioned. She started to listen carefully so as not to miss anything.

"The storm sure hit Mr. Burkett hard! It must have cost him a pretty penny to replace all the glass in the top of his Picture Gallery," said one of the men.

"No doubt it did," said another. "That's surely a fine little house on wheels."

"Say, Boss," said a third, "that would be just the thing for you! Just the thing to keep your tools in when you are out on a road contract."

"It would at that! You don't suppose the picture man wants to sell it, do you?" asked the one addressed as Boss.

"No, I don't suppose he does, but you might have one made like it. It is surely fine," replied the third speaker.

Hetty could hardly wait to get back to the little house. Why couldn't they sell the little house on wheels? They wouldn't need it if they could buy the cottage, and they could buy the cottage if they sold the Traveling Gallery! And she ran as fast as her legs would carry her.

"Father," she cried, all out of breath, as she opened the screen door of the little house, "there's a man in the grocery who wants to buy the little house on wheels—couldn't we—we could buy—couldn't we, Father?"

"What's this? What's this?" exclaimed Father.

Then Hetty explained to Father that she had heard the men in the grocery talking about the little house on wheels, and that one man, who, she thought, was their boss, said he would like to have one just like it! He wanted it to keep his tools in.

Father thought it a perfectly good idea, but he feared

it was just idle talk, and would not mean anything. However, he decided it would not hurt anything if he went down to the store and inquired.

"While you get dinner, I'll walk to the grocery and see what I can find out," announced Father.

Hetty was so excited she could hardly peel the apples for the sauce. Her fingers were all thumbs. Anyway, she would have an especially good dinner, for she suddenly realized that she was enormously hungry. She was sure she could eat both breakfast and dinner and a fair amount of each.

When the meal was ready, Hetty went to the door to watch for her father.

Presently she saw him coming down the street with the Boss by his side, talking earnestly. She jumped up and down for very joy. It could mean only one thing; the stranger really did want a little house on wheels.

Father introduced the gentleman to Hetty. Then he said, "This man would like to see the rooms of our little house."

When he had finished looking at the house from reception room to darkroom, the stranger said, "Well, Mr. Burkett, this is a fine house on wheels, and I'll take it and give you what you ask for it. When can I take possession?"

"That's just it. If I let you have it now, how will we get back to our new home, and how can we finish the pictures we have left to do?" puzzled Father.

"Where is this farm of yours?" asked the stranger.

"It's about a mile from Fort Jefferson, in Summit County. Quite a way from here," answered Father.

"Summit County! That's where I'm planning to go. That's where we make the new state macadam road. It's out from the county seat, but I guess I can go a few miles out of my way to get you folks back to your own town. And I'll wait until you finish your pictures. I have a little business to attend to, anyway, which will take me several days. I live here in Cedar Springs, but I build roads all over the state," explained the stranger.

And so it was agreed that when the pictures were all finished, the Boss, as Hetty called him, would hitch up his team to the Traveling Gallery and Old Doll could follow along behind. They could go faster that way.

Hetty could hardly contain herself in the remaining days at Cedar Springs. She worked early and late at Father's side to get the work done as quickly as possible. As they worked, they planned, and this time it was no dream which might turn into a nightmare, as Father said, but something for which they knew they had the money. Mr. Lorry, for that was the real name of the Boss, had paid Father a good price for the little house on wheels. He said there would be enough to finish the payment on the cottage, and to remodel the house besides.

Father had written to Mr. Corwin to hire someone to clean up the place and have it ready for them.

Hetty felt that she could hardly wait until their work was finished at Cedar Springs. Finally the last day arrived. They would leave on the morrow.

Chapter XVI

A HOME ALL THEIR OWN

Hetty felt that she would always remember that last morning at Cedar Springs. She was up long before the sun, although Father had said there was no need for extra early rising, as they were not to leave until seven o'clock. But she was so full of excitement that she could not sleep.

Everything had been put in readiness the day before, so there was only breakfast to prepare and dishes to wash. This took scarcely any time at all. Accordingly six o'clock found Hetty with time on her hands. The little house had been put in order, Jeremiah had been given his milk, and Hetty herself had put on her best dress for the occasion.

She determined to take one last look at the town. She started with Jeremiah in her arms down the main street of the little city. It seemed like a city to Hetty for it was ever so much larger than the other towns that she had visited during the summer.

Hetty had been so busy before, that she had seen very little of the town which was to be the last one in their travels. Now she took time to look around her.

It was a very nice town, but in her mind it compared most unfavorably with their first town, Fort Jefferson. Its one church was a frame building, neither as large nor as fine as the one in Friendly Village, which she had attended with Lydia. Its school building, a two-story structure, was quite modern in appearance, but Hetty decided that the brick was not as bright as the one in her best-loved town.

She had to admit that the houses here were similar. The stores were larger, she knew, and there were more of them, but she was sure that she liked the stores in Friendly Village better; at least, she knew the owners of them, which meant more.

Hetty was thinking of Friendly Village, and how glad she would be to see it again. She walked on, not noticing how far she was going, until she saw there was no more sidewalk. Then she thought it was high time that she turned back. She walked much faster on the way back.

As she came near the little house on wheels, she saw that the Boss was there with his team and several men

were helping him. They were putting a doubletree on the front of the little house where the singletree had been.

Of course, they would need it changed, for the Boss was going to use his two fine roan horses to pull the Traveling Gallery. Old Doll was to walk behind, but Hetty wondered if she could keep up with Mr. Lorry's lively pair. The old horse was used to sauntering along at her pleasure, but these horses looked as if they wanted to run away.

Father, who was watching the men, called to Hetty as she came near, "All aboard! Train leaves in ten minutes. Track six!"

Hetty laughed at Father's joke, for it was good to see him in such jubilant spirits. She hoped he would always be that gay in the future. He would be, she thought, if he became strong and well, as he was sure to do out in the country, where the air is always fresh and pure. Then he could have plenty of fresh sweet milk to drink, too. He would not need to work as steadily, and could rest when he felt like it.

Hetty said no good-byes at Cedar Springs. She had been too busy to make any special friends, but as the strange conveyance passed through the town on its way out, the few people on the streets at this early hour waved a pleasant farewell to them as they passed.

Hetty returned their greetings with an extra large smile for good measure. She could afford to be generous now. When she turned her thoughts ahead she saw

nothing but smiling days in the future, and she was supremely happy.

As the trip was a very long one, and they were in a hurry to get there, Father and the Boss had decided to drive all day and all night, stopping only long enough for meals.

Hetty agreed to cook for the Boss and his two helpers who had come with him. The Boss, who was really Mr. Lorry, said he would pay her board money, and she could buy something for herself with it. She was pleased, for she thought of many things she would need before school opened. She had had no new clothes since leaving the city.

As Hetty thought of the city now, it seemed to her a long, long time since she had left it. So much had happened since that spring day in early April, when she and her father had set out on their gypsying travels. What a lovely summer it had been! And what good times were now in store for her back in Friendly Village.

The day was unusually pleasant for the month of August and Hetty was enjoying every minute of it.

The Boss and his men with Father were sitting on the long seat they had fixed in front of the Traveling Gallery, talking about politics, the weather, and other current topics. Hetty sat on the end near her father, but she paid no attention to their conversation. She was busy with thoughts of her own and they were indeed happy ones.

She watched the farmers working in the fields as they passed. How different the fields looked now, from those she had seen on their first day out of the city. The corn that was being planted then was now fully grown with long, heavy ears hanging down from the stocks and feathery tassels on top. The wheat and oats had been harvested, and the hay put in barns. Hetty had learned a great deal about the country in those few months of traveling about it. Father never tired of answering her questions. Lydia had been such a help to her, too.

She almost laughed out loud when she thought of Lydia and how surprised she would be when she found out they were going to be neighbors. Not close neighbors, but what was a mile and a half? Father said that was about the correct distance.

They would be one mile from Friendly Village. Lydia was one-half mile from town on the other side. They could walk back and forth easily. They would meet at school, and they could even go to Sunday School and church together.

Hetty gave a sigh of content when she thought of the time she had gone to church with Lydia. She could feel the lovely music even now, and to think she could hear it every Sunday from now on!

When the Traveling Gallery and its occupants stopped at the noon hour, Hetty bustled around the kitchen preparing dinner. She realized that she must cook more than twice as much as usual.

She counted the potatoes; two for each of the men and one for herself. Would that be enough, she wondered? She added two more for good measure, for she wanted them to have plenty. Now about the ham; Father had cut up a generous supply for her only the day before. She trimmed it carefully, cutting it into moderate-sized pieces.

While the potatoes boiled and the ham fried, Hetty divided her time between watching the stove and setting the little drop-leaf table. She found that by using both leaves she would have room for five places. She crowded her own plate as near Father's as she could. That would leave more room for the men.

When everything was on the table ready to be eaten, Hetty looked it over to be sure it was right; a large platter of ham fried to a delicious brown, a dish of mashed potatoes with a bit of butter and pepper right on top of the mound, a tureen of apple sauce left from the day before, and a bowl of gravy made with milk. Then there was jam, and butter, and bread. She filled each glass with some cool water and put a cup of hot coffee at each place where the men were to sit.

The men had been busy feeding the horses and giving them water from the well. They were coming toward the little house just as Hetty went to the door to announce that dinner was ready.

"May we have a pan and some soap?" asked the Boss. "We'd better wash up or this little cook will fire us."

Hetty gave them a washpan, soap, and clean towels, and they went to wash. Soon they were back in the little kitchen ready for their dinner. Hetty did not sit down to eat until the men had been served.

When they had finished the meal, the Boss turned to Father and said, "You have a mighty fine cook here, Burkett! What will you take for her? I need a cook, too!"

"I'm afraid she's not for sale," said Father. "I couldn't get along without her. She's all I have."

The rest at the noon hour made the remainder of the day's journey less tiresome.

Supper took only a short time, and before Hetty realized it, the stars were coming out one by one in the heavens, making it look like a Christmas tree. She pointed out the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper. The Big Dipper was quite plain, and as it was upside down, Hetty exclaimed, "The water's all run out, Father! It won't rain for a long time!"

The moon, too, rose gradually from behind the distant woods and hung like a huge ball of fire in the blue-black sky. When Hetty tired of counting the stars, she traced the features of the man in the moon, and imagined he was watching her. She felt that he, too, knew of her happiness and was smiling with her. It made her eyelids heavy to watch the sky, but Father knew that she was tired and sleepy.

"Why don't you put your little cot down and take a nap?" he advised.

"Will you call me before we reach our new cottage?" she asked him.

"Yes, of course, but we won't be there until morning. You'll be awake then!" insisted Father.

Hetty unfastened her small bed from its place on the wall, and before she had finished saying her prayer she was sound asleep.

The men had arranged to take turns driving, so that each of them could get some sleep. They spread the horse blankets on the floor of the little studio, and Father put some comforters on top. This made them a very good bed. They said it was much better than they were used to having when they were out on the road.

When Hetty opened her eyes the next morning, Father was bending over her saying, "We're almost there, Hetty. You said I should call you."

Could it possibly be morning, she thought, as she rubbed her eyes to make them stay open? She felt that she had just closed them only a minute before.

"I slept quite a while myself!" confessed Father.

By the time Hetty was dressed the little house on wheels drew up in front of the home of Mr. Clem, who had charge of the FOR SALE cottage.

Father went in the house to talk to him, and when he came out he was jingling some keys in his hand.

"Mr. Clem has the place all fixed up for us," he announced. "He has fed the cows and the chickens, but hasn't milked the cow yet. Now that we are here we can do it for ourselves!"

"Oh, goody, goody!" cried Hetty. "We can have fresh milk for our breakfast!"

"Yes, of course, we can. I'll milk the cow while you get something to eat. We wouldn't want these gentlemen to leave without a good breakfast to start the day right," said Father.

As they drove up the short lane to the cottage, Hetty noticed that the grass and weeds had been cut, and the boards removed from the windows. The FOR SALE sign was gone, too, and Hetty realized for the first time that it wasn't a FOR SALE cottage any longer; it was their very own home, the home of the Burketts. She was so happy that she felt that she could fly, if she only had a good pair of wings.

"Did you tell Mr. Clem to have the grass cut, too?" asked Hetty, coming down to earth again.

"Yes, I told him I wanted the house and yard put in tiptop shape—that is—I meant cleaned up, and he surely carried out instructions! It doesn't look like the same place," rejoiced Father.

It took only a minute to open the doors and windows and let the fresh morning air and sunshine into the little cottage.

The Boss helped Father carry the coal oil stove into the new kitchen, and Hetty set about preparing breakfast.

The kitchen seemed so large, after being used to the tiny one of the little house on wheels, that Hetty wondered if she would get lost in it! It would not seem

as big when the furniture was put in its place, she felt sure.

Father took a bucket and went to the barn to milk the cow, while the men continued to carry every bit of the furniture from the little house on wheels into the new cottage. The Boss wanted only the house.

Father soon returned with a bucket of foaming milk and some eggs that he found in the manger. After straining it, Hetty filled each glass at the table with the warm sweet milk. She fried a big platter of bacon and some of the newly laid eggs. The men had carried the small drop-leaf table into the new kitchen, and Hetty had put up the leaves and set it with five places.

It didn't take those men long to dispose of Hetty's breakfast. Each one had a large bowl of cornflakes, besides the bacon and eggs, and bread and jam, to say nothing of the steaming hot coffee.

Hetty was pleased that the men liked her cooking well enough to "lick the platter clean." She was even more pleased over the money that the Boss slipped into her apron pocket. It was much more than she had expected. She could hardly wait to spend it.

Even Jeremiah had a specially good breakfast. He looked as if he had white whiskers after he drank his saucer of sweet, foamy milk.

As the men drove away in the little house on wheels, after telling the Burketts good-bye, the Boss remarked, "Nice folks, these Burketts. I hope he gets some color in his face out here in the country."

Hetty and her father stood at the gate watching the Traveling Gallery, as it moved down the lane. And they could not help feeling a pang of regret at its going. They had had many happy days in the little house, and they felt that they really owed it a debt of gratitude, for without it they would not have been able to buy their little country cottage.

"Good-bye, little house, good-bye!" cried Hetty, as she brushed away a tear with the back of her hand.

Then she thought of the many lovely things in store for her. She grabbed her father's hand and fairly pulled him back to the little cottage, which was waiting to be inspected more fully.

Hetty did not stop to wash the dishes now! She and her father explored every inch of the place, including the barn, where Old Doll had been put in her stall. She took Jeremiah with her, for she felt that he was going to be as happy in the new home as they were. He could have the whole barn for his home.

The cow was in the barnyard, and Hetty just had to stop and pat her. She, too, appeared glad to have some one near her, for she rubbed her head against Hetty's sleeve in a friendly manner.

"What is her name, Father?" she asked. "Do you know?"

"No, I didn't ask Mr. Clem, but we'll have to find out, won't we?" returned her father.

"She's a Jersey cow, isn't she, Father?" inquired Hetty, rubbing the gentle cow's sleek sides.

"Yes, she's a Jersey, all right. She looks as if she might be pure bred," replied her father.

"I'm going to learn to milk, too!" announced Hetty.

She was so delighted with everything about the place that she raced from one thing to another, admiring and planning what they could do to improve it.

She could hardly wait to arrange the furniture in the house, and put up some curtains. She realized they would need to buy a few pieces of new furniture to supplement what they had in the Traveling Gallery.

She was enthusiastic over the real fireplace in the living room. It had been boarded up, as if it had not been used for a long time, but Father said he could easily fix it so they could make a log fire in it. Mr. Clem had had the inside of the house cleaned as well as the yard, and it fairly shone. The windows sparkled in the early morning sun.

There was a large pantry where Father planned to make a darkroom. Here he could do pictures in his spare time. There would always be weddings, confirmations, and family group pictures to be taken, to say nothing of the new babies that would come from time to time.

Hetty and her father went on planning until the morning had slipped by before either of them realized it. Hetty had not even cleared away the breakfast dishes. She decided to do both the breakfast and the dinner dishes together. She hurriedly prepared a lunch for them, for Father had promised to go with Mr. Clem

to town in the afternoon to finish the deed for the little cottage.

"You may ride to town with us and go over to see Lydia and tell her the good news," said Father.

"Not today, Father, I'll stay home and straighten up a bit. Then maybe I'll go over tomorrow and bring Lydia home with me for supper," insisted Hetty, as she planned what she would do while he was away.

That evening when Father returned it was to a house of order and neatness. He could hardly believe his eyes! It seemed hardly possible that Hetty could accomplish so much in such a short time.

The next day Hetty herself had two surprises. When she went to the barn to hunt for eggs in the haymow, she found Jeremiah cuddled up in a nest with a family of four baby kittens! She ran to the house as fast as she could go, for she could hardly wait to tell her father.

The other surprise came when she was in the kitchen clearing away the dinner dishes. She heard a gentle rap! rap! at the door, and when she looked, there stood Lydia!

Hetty had thought of going to Lydia's that very afternoon and surprising her, but here was Lydia doing the surprising herself. Hetty was too surprised to talk. She could only say, "Oh!" and the two girls were in each other's arms.

"How did you know we were here?" asked Hetty, when she could find words to express herself.

"Father came home from town last night and told us that you had bought the Stein place, and had just moved there. I—"

"Did you say this is the Stein place?" interrupted Hetty excitedly.

"Why, yes, why do you ask? We—didn't you know —isn't it—" stammered Lydia, not understanding the nature of Hetty's excitement.

"My, I'm glad! This is the place that Mr. Stifel told me about. He said they used to call it the Hunted House. Won't it be fun! We can hunt for treasures all the time!" cried Hetty, dancing around the room. "Why didn't you come earlier?"

"I wanted to come the first thing this morning, but I had to help Mother with the churning. She sent you some fresh butter, too. She thought I might help you straighten up your house, but it looks as if you were all finished!" added Lydia.

"Of course you may help us. We'll find something to do, and thanks for the butter. I'll have to learn how to make butter myself, won't I? First, I want to show you everything about our little farm!" insisted Hetty.

They stopped to talk to Father, who came in at that minute. He had spoken to Lydia when she first came into the yard, "Go to the door quietly and surprise Hetty!" he had told her in a low tone, and she had followed his instructions.

After the two girls had gone the rounds of the house and yard, they proceeded to the barn.

"I have a surprise for you!" cried Hetty, running on ahead to open the barn door. She led the way up the ladder to the haymow.

"Kittens!" exclaimed Lydia. "This can't be Jeremiah!"

"The same," laughed Hetty. "One never knows what a prophet will do! Anyway, I've changed his name. It's Deborah now!"

"That's fine. I think Deborah ought to make a good mother," affirmed Lydia, and the two girls laughed merrily.

It was like old times! Hetty and Lydia were together again, with many happy days in store for them both. Hetty was reminded of the very first afternoon she had spent at Lydia's, only today it was reversed; Hetty was doing the showing around, and Lydia was looking on. And both of them were happy.

Arm in arm they walked back to the house. They stopped for a minute at the orchard to the right of the cottage to see if there were some apples that they could eat. Hetty picked up some big Yellow Bellflower apples and put them in her apron which she used as a sack to carry them.

"Apple dumplings for supper, Lydia, can you stay?" asked Hetty.

"Yes, of course I can, if you want me," she replied with her mouth full of apple. "These Bellflowers are good!"

Hetty looked about her. Everything was green and

lovely. The air was sweet with the fragrance of ripe fruit. It seemed almost like a dream to her, with Lydia here. Would she wake up and have it all disappear?

The girls found many things to do that afternoon. To give them a long evening, Hetty decided to have an early supper. They could milk the cow, gather the eggs, and do many other things in the evening.

Lydia peeled the apples, while Hetty made the dough for the dumplings, and while they baked, she set the table for three. She found some oxeye daisies in the corner of the garden for a centerpiece for the table. She wanted everything to look as nice as possible for her guest.

She skimmed the cream from the pan of milk left from the morning milking. She thought it would be good on the dumplings. When they were baked to a golden brown, Hetty called her father, who was pulling some weeds in the little garden back of the house.

Hetty and her father knew that this was the best meal they had ever eaten together. They felt this because they were in their own home. And as Father looked across the table at Hetty and Lydia, he had a feeling of perfect contentment.

Hetty glanced up at her father at that moment and she herself had a feeling like a flame that warmed her through. There was nothing in all the world that could begin to measure their real happiness at that moment.

HETTY

OLD DOLL

JEREMIAH

LYDIA

SHEP

BABY ROSE

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